You begin with an idea and a...

SKETCH

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REVEALED
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SECRETS

ED McGUINNESS
ARTIST OF DC COMIC'S SUPERMAN

Bob Hickey
Along with his duties with Sketch Magazine, he has been the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest and Tempered Steele. He oversees production work at Sacred Studios which is currently packaging Parts Unknown for Image Comics and has a new Blood and Roses series in the works along with his new creator owned series Race Danger.
Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions.
www.bluelinepro.com

Aaron Hubrich was going to be the next great fantasy illustrator, but something caught his attention in college, and he never looked back...Comics! Aaron has worked in comics since his self publishing days in 1997. It was then that he made a book titled Spellcaster, which began his understanding of the publishing part of the industry. He went on to hone his skills at the now defunct Checker Comics as a computer colorist and designer, then later for Blueline Pro. His other credits include coloring for Image Comics. He lives in the Norhtern Kentucky/Cincinnati area, minutes away from riots and bad baseball!

John Gravato
Born and raised in good ol' South Africa, spent the last 8 years as a freelancer illustrator working on everything from childrens books to advertising and movie storyboards. Moved to Britain in the late 90's, currently illustrating for Games Workshop Ltd and more recently for Gf2 media expanding their manga properties.

Beau Smith
created and writes Parts Unknown currently at Image Comics, writer of The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls , Wolverine/Shi, Batman/Wildcat and the upcoming cross over-Xena/Wonder Woman and several Star Wars stories for Dark Horse.
www.sacredstudios.com/partsunknown

Paul Sizer teaches graphic design at Western Michigan University, runs his own freelance design and illustration business, and in his spare time writes, illustrates and designs his comic book LITTLE WHITE MOUSE, published by BLP Comics.
Paul lives and works in Kalamazoo, Michigan.
See more of Pauls work at:
www.littlewhitemouse.com.

Klaus
Born at the beginning of recorded history, KLAUS was cryogenically frozen by a coalition of secret societies, for reasons still unclear to this day. He was released from stasis in the early Seventies (along with his "maternal" twin FIGG) to achieve one goal: Create the masterpiece that would be called SUPER GRAPE.
Now living a seemingly normal life in the Midwest.
He also enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Tom Bierbaum, with wife Mary, has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures, a creator owned project by Knight Press.

M² a.k.a. **Mike Maydak** has been taken under-wing as the patawan in training at the Blue Line Pro ranch. He is learning much from the experienced crew at Sketch about the comic industry and has mastered the technique of "getting lunch". He often contributes in the form of graphic design, writing, and editorial work. He is currently attending school at NKU with a Journalism major. On the side, he works on his fantasy novel.

Jason Howard lives in Holt, Michigan with his wife Shannon and no pets. He is a professional designer who works as the manager of the graphics department of a large corporation. His past comic credits includes work published by Caliber Comics, Blink Comics and Big Bang Comics. He is currently working on penciling a short story for Infinite Dreams Studio and putting the finishing touches on his own comic masterpiece, Local 205. Sharp eyed readers will spot a pinup he did in an issue of BlueLine's own Little White Mouse, as well as a pinup in an upcoming issue of Image's Violent Messiahs. Jason has no website where you can view his work, but if you swing by the house sometime he'll be happy to show you his sketchbook.

Flint Henry's comic career began in the waning days of the independent market of the '80's, where his frenetic and violent style enjoyed a popular run on the fondly remembered Grimjack at First Comics. Over the years to follow, some personal favorites include Lawdog; a creator owned character done with longtime friend Chuck Dixon from Marvel/Epic, as well as numerous Batman related projects from DC. He's also produced a variety of comic product for Todd Toys (now McFarlane Toys), Image, SQP Inc, and Chaos! , as well as Eclipse, Dark Horse, Palladium, and others.

Chuck Dixon
The amazingly prolific and popular Charles Dixon punches up Sketch with something the Action-Miester knows plenty about: guns. With scripts flying like 7.62 's in Somalia, no one knows if he burns out a barrel or a word processor faster, but when it comes to chambering a round or charging a plot with great characters, there's always plenty of excitement and satisfied comic fans around a Dixon comic mag. Keep your head under the wire and head for the racks to get Chuck's upcoming Superman/Tarzan mini-series from DC and Dark Horse, his Springfield - alicious (the town, not the rifle this time out) lead in The Simpsons # 63 from Bongo, or his next Doom mini from Marvel. And if you're on the streets of Gotham or Bludhaven, there's The Last Laugh from the good folks at DC, Chuck, and writing buddy Scott Beatty.

Comic books are a **fun media** and one of the few that anyone could create their own visions to share with others. Blue Line Productions goals are aimed toward the enhancement of art through knowledge and quality art supplies. No matter what it takes we make sure that the reader has the information that they are wanting.

A Note

Success...

What a satisfying little word.

It comes in many ways, so never look away even from its smallest offerings.

Many big things begin with small successes.

What is success to you?

Writing a page of your comic story a day, or illustrating a panel after the family has been tucked away for the night? How about creating that yearly issue of your favorite childhood character just in time to take to the local convention.

Success to some is creating 48 pages of a comic as you work your day job and spend enough time with the family so they don't feel shunned.

Pace yourself, only put upon your shoulders what you can accomplish within the time given. I'm not saying not to push, but don't over burden.

Success, no matter how big or small, can work to your benefit.

Build upon the small successes and eventually you'll become a big success story.

Success...

We all achieve it; we just have to remember to allow ourselves to recognize it.

I'd like to thank Ed McGuinness who went out of his way to open his artistic career and his sketches to us.

Also, we have a bunch of new faces contributing to Sketch for the first time. Aaron Hubrich comes aboard and gives his insights by continuing our digital coloring column. He has done several jobs for Image as well as a few other publishers. Up and coming artist Jason Howard provides us with a gun article that has been a real eye opener for all of us illustrators. Veteran E-Comicteer Nick Pendleton (KLAUS) lets you in on the do's and don'ts of creating an e-comic. The multi talented John Gravato shares a step-by-step on a richly colored manga style paint progressive. Chuck Dixon makes a welcome return to share his thoughts on what not to do when using guns in your story. Hopefully this time I won't make the front page of Chuck's web page. I'm still getting email from the last time.

Next issue, the awe inspiring George Perez on the Ultimate Team-Up....

Take care,

Bob Hickey
bobh@bluelinepro.com

ED McGUINNESS INTERVIEW

What?? Were you expecting Superman.
Ed cranked out this very sharp looking Batgirl in his sketch book.

If you've been taking a bucolic Sunday stroll through Smallville or looked up in the sky while caught in a Metropolis traffic jam lately, you've seen...Ed McGuinness!

Ed McGuinness – helping to guide Superman, Batman, and a number of other characters through the excitement and thrills of the DC universe.

Ed McGuinness — moving at almost super-speed through a range of characters and genres, from relatively obscure beginnings to the spotlight of one of the industry's most recognizable characters, from the bouncy and blood-drenched forbidden books of Vampirella to the respectable, fact-filled pages of the Daily Planet. Ed's flown through the airspace of Harris, Marvel, Wildstorm, and Awesome before landing at DC, where his action-filled art is currently attracting Superman readers.

As tough as his current character, Ed withstood the triple threat of looming deadlines, illness, and a hectic convention schedule to kindly grant Sketch the following phone interview. With the ability to be far more candid concerning his personal life than Clark, Ed speaks frankly about his life experience and its effect on his work, as well as his Kryptonite-proof penciling techniques.

Don't fail to check out the Superman/ Super McGuinness/ super – Doomsday punchout super-sized Superman # 175. Up, up, and Ed-waaaay

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Sketch: *Ed, let me start right off by asking what many fans and other comic artists are wondering: is it intimidating drawing Superman? After all, he is one of the world's most highly-recognizable icons, comic or otherwise...*

Ed McGuinness: Oh yeah! I grew up worshiping the character. And it's just wild to do this cool character that you grew up with and followed all this time, it's just out there (laughter). It is a little intimidating, sure, but I love the character and the book, and that helps to overcome some of that fan – guy apprehension. And now I get to spend hours and hours with the character on a weekly basis, so you get into it more and more and just kind of reel it in, and get to do what I do...I love it!

Sketch: *So out of the many "biggies" that might be available to you to work on, Clark and his gang would be your character of choice?*

Ed McGuinness: Absolutely one of my characters of choice. There's been so much cool

Superman stuff...where do you start, you know? But I really liked the John Byrne take after a period where I hadn't followed the book that closely, and again...it just kind of reeled me in, because I just always liked the character in general. Absolutely, he's certainly one of the characters I've always wanted to work on.

Sketch: *Why do you think you find him so appealing? A lot of creators seem to share some attribute or some interest along with a character they're particularly interested in working on beyond just a "wouldn't it be cool if Capt. Kpow did this?" "X" or "Y" story. Over the years and years Superman seems to have continued to be - in my mind at least - a very clean cut, very...earnest character, always the Boy Scout and nice guy...am I right?*

Ed McGuinness: Yes, yes it is...they are...Superman is one of the "cleaner" books in the industry to be able to work on (laughter), and because I like to be able to show my work to my kids and stuff too, there is all that. But then

there's the character itself, of course...just visually his costume, in my opinion, it's one of the most perfect and cool superhero costumes, you know? He's just a great character to draw. And you know that almost every hero comes from him, pretty much him and Batman. They're pretty much the genesis as far as super hero costumes are concerned, you know? Even down to the fact that Supe's costume is primary colors, and every power kind of comes from some spinoff of his...it's really neat, in my opinion he's the epitome of the super hero. He's like...just so much larger than life and I just love the character, he's just a lot of fun.

Sketch: *And you find these wholesome qualities appealing to work with?*

Ed McGuinness: Oh, Yeah! Totally. I mean I enjoy Wolverine, but Superman's not gonna be gutting somebody (laughs).

Sketch: *Right...well, I'll wait for Pat Mill's take (laughter). All right, you're working on*

one of the greatest characters ever – how did you get to Metropolis, Ed? How do actually get into the industry and what kind of background do you have?

Ed McGuinness: I started drawing when…well, from what my parents told me; from like when I could hold a pencil. That was pretty much when I started drawing, really young. I remember getting the Electric Company cartoon magazine that would have like Spiderman comics and stuff in it. I was reading that stuff when I was really young and growing up. One of my cousins, Andy, was into comics and he really pushed them with me. And then one of my other cousins, Michael, just kept buying me comics and I was just into it from really early on, just looking at the comics and reading it when I could. Laughing at them and just really enjoying them. And I guess I just kept on drawing.

Sketch: There were other things around – other magazines, books, and stuff, I'm sure. Did you find them as appealing as comics? Toys? Sports?

Ed McGuinness: Oh yeah, toys! But lots of them were comic book type toys - I had some Mego toys like Batman and Superman, the Spiderman Mego and stuff. It was just my entire world as a child, I mean literally the whole thing until I was like 10. It was great. You know, I believed that, like, Spiderman lived in New York (laughter).

Sketch: And now he's spending some time in Hollywood, but I'm sure his heart's in the Big Apple, Ed.

Ed McGuinness: I just love the medium. Just the total imagination of comics, it's like limitless fun. It's just such a good time to sit down and read a comic and feel satisfied. So that's what I ended up doing, just growing up drawing and looking at different cool artists. And we'd kind of turn each other on to different books and artists, and then I began to realize that there's different styles and stuff. I think I was in fifth grade when I discovered John Byrne, and I was knocked out. I was like "whoa, this guy like draws different than everybody," you know? It was all that, and I started following some of his stuff and actually buying some of those "X" man packages and stuff, and I just went from there. I just kept drawing. I'd copy some of Byrne's stuff, and then I would do, like, the Art Adams stuff when he started coming out. I just kept drawing everyday and making up characters; I have like two hundred characters from high school (laughter).

Sketch: Do think it was the characters or the art that attracted you more, Ed? Or maybe it was the total package; did you make any distinction?

Ed McGuinness: Yeah, I think it was more of the art and the design. Just the colors and everything. I don't know what it was, but I was very visual. And it's pretty funny, because growing up…as different as stuff is now, I really don't read as many comics

Sketch: In looking at your art over time it's always been fairly open and airy, but in looking at your more recent Superman stuff – just terrific, of course - you seem to be more and more design conscious? Maybe it's not a conscious thing on your part, but are you approaching your material

differently than you were before? Or are you handling things a bit differently due to your feel for the character?

Ed McGuinness: I think it's somewhat conscious, sure. But at the same time, it's just the other thing where the more you do it, the more you learn. I look back at some of the stuff that I've done and I wonder "what was I thinking about that, or why did I do that? Why did that work?" And then I always try to come out with my own set of rules from there. At first things just happened naturally, just from doing the work all the time and just refining it and just beginning to understand how a panel works, and where the power points and stuff are in a panel, and the narrative and how to weave the eye around the page. And then I just come up with these "bologna" stories in my mind (laughter).

Sketch:But you're approaching things in a more or less " Natural McGuinness" Fashion – in a sense you're just doing it, as opposed to sitting down and applying some kind of fairly preset pattern or approach in order to gain the impact that so much of your material has?

Ed McGuinness: No, no, no, not at all. I'll just kind of do things that I think feel right. Sometimes it will be, you know, "this would work better this way, because of this rule in my head." But I'm like, "no, it just doesn't look as good. Doesn't matter." So I'll scrap that idea and just do it the way that I think looks right, and looks better.

Sketch: Ed, you've been drawing since you were a wee McGuinness, did you have any kind of formal training that helped prepare you for the field?

Ed McGuinness: I haven't. Basically, like I said, I was just drawing entirely through high school…and just kept on drawing.

Sketch: So you're entirely self taught?

Ed McGuinness: Oh yeah. I decided that I was going to try to go to the Kubert School. We actually took the trip down and everything. After high school I just wanted a couple of years to screw around, you know? I didn't want to have to go right into doing some serious work. So I went down there and got to show my stuff to Mike Chen. Mike was looking at my stuff and he said, " you know, I have to be honest with you, you really should try to get work now. Even if it's underground work, 'cause you're already at that point. Basically you don't need to come here and spend the money, because you pretty much already have it down."

Sketch: Now that had to be cool, how exciting can it get for someone just trying to break into the field to get that kind of immediate and positive response? That must have been terrific for you.

Ed McGuinness: Well it was pretty exciting for my Dad, because he knew he wouldn't have to shell out the ten grand (laughter). I was flattered, totally. I don't even like to tell that story for fear it'll sound like I'm "tooting my own horn" or something, but it was great.

Sketch: Oh, okay. So then you are then tooting your own horn. You <u>are</u> patting yourself on your back. You are being arrogant and proud and telling everyone how you... (laughter)

Ed McGuinness: I suppose. Exactly!

Sketch: Yes, that would be you (laughter). Seriously, that's a great story. Again, how great for someone – "Yeah, I'm ready to draw professionally…right now."

Ed McGuinness: That's what happened. But I really wanted to go anyway just to learn the serious rules of the trade and everything, make some friends down there, and just, you know, do whatever. But I decided to come back home and just start working on my stuff more seriously. And I was working at a pizza joint on the side.

Sketch: Did you stick to comics then, or did you consider other kinds of art training at this point – graphics, advertising…?

Ed McGuinness: No, I was just fixed on comics, I didn't even have it in my mind about anything else. All my eggs are in one basket at this point, I think. But, yeah, then I was working over at the pizza place and the craziest thing happened there. I don't gamble. But I just bought a scratch ticket one time and I ended up winning fifty thousand dollars on it! It kinda
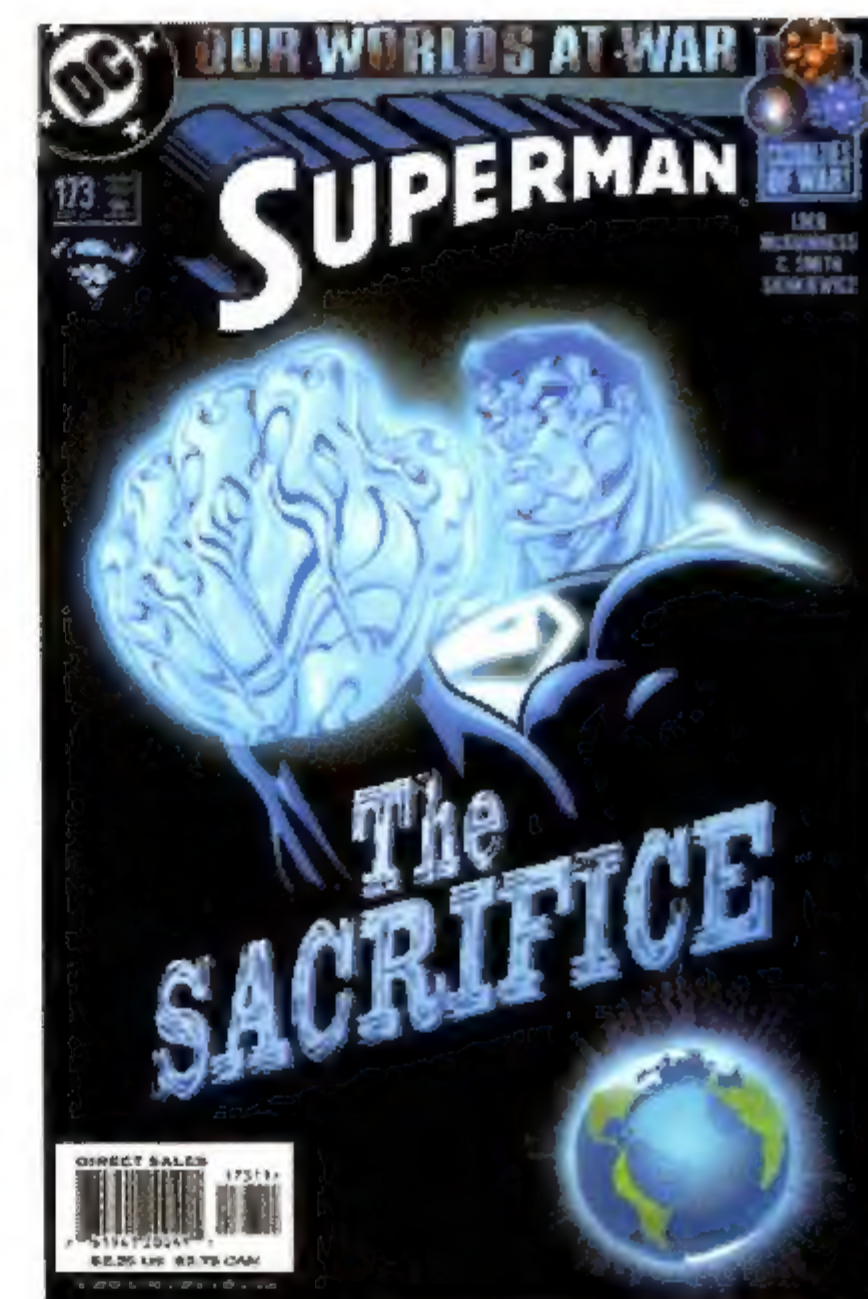
bought me a little bit of time so I could go part time with them (the pizza place), and so I could work on the comics part-time.

Sketch: And you could've bought part ownership in the pizza place (laughter); what are you talking about?

Ed McGuinness: And I ended up giving all the money away and stuff, and after taxes.... Well, it was crazy!

Sketch: That's a wild story! Another great story.

Ed McGuinness: Oh, it was nuts! It was nuts. But I ended up giving so much of it away — I have, like, nothing to show for it at all.

Sketch: Well, that was awful nice of you. I'll expect my cut, Ed.

Ed McGuinness: That was years ago, man.

Sketch: You must have squirreled a little of it away, Ed.

Ed McGuinness: Hmm?

Sketch: I said you must have squirreled a little away, Ed.

Ed McGuinness: There's nothing.

Sketch: Ed. Gimme a quarter, Ed. Ed, gimme a quarter!

Ed McGuinness: You know, half of that money paid for my wedding, and the rest...

Sketch: These are some stories, Ed. Just for the sake of comparison, I won a tiny rubber monster head that you could put on a pencil at a friend's Halloween party back in fourth grade. Okay? So, what do you think of that, Mr. Lucky? Well...did you put any of your winnings toward your art interests?

Ed McGuinness: I ended up buying some good reference books – figure and perspective books, that kind of thing – by that time I was earnestly but basically training myself.

Sketch: All right, you're the East Coast's richest aspiring pizza artist at this point. What was your next step to move toward comics professionally?

Ed McGuinness: I had met a friend who had sculpted for some of the garage kits and that kind of thing, and he started bringing me to some of the new kit and model shows, and stuff and I started doing stuff for them.

Sketch: Anything our kit builder or McGuinness fans would know or recognize, Ed?

Ed McGuinness: Really, it was stuff that had such limited print lines and stuff, I'd doubt it. And then I got in touch with a couple of underground books. Actually they came and found me, because they had seen my work. So I ended up drawing a couple of zombie books.

Sketch: And there's really not too much we could see? If your work was of that quality even at that point – and it's not Superman-type stuff, obviously – I'm sure it would be interesting to check out?

Ed McGuinness: I don't want you to look them up (laughter).

Sketch: Seriously?

Ed McGuinness: I'm serious. It was horrible stuff, man, stuff I would never draw again. I can't even believe I drew it the first time.

Sketch: Well, at some point I think everybody is – well, maybe not embarrassed by – but perhaps not thrilled with things they might have done when they look back on it years later. "Boy, if circumstances were different, perhaps I'd have done...or not have done that. Or done it differently."

Say, that talented Mr. Tom Sniegoski scribe first brought you to my attention, not all that far back. He's the person that kind of introduced you to your first professional gig, right? How did you fall in with him, did he come to your pizza place? More of that good McGuinness luck?

Ed McGuinness: Oh yeah, you know what happened? I was going to a comic store, New England Comics – Tom always went there, and a guy I knew was doing some underground work and he said that Tom was around. I left my number there at the store, and I think he (Tom) ended up calling me. And then we went out to

lunch and I showed him that I'm still out to lunch (laughter), but he liked my stuff and was nice enough to show it to his editor at the time.

Sketch: Over at Harris? I'll bet that would have been Meloney Crawford Chadwick at that time?

Ed McGuinness: That's right.

Sketch: Very nice lady, very nice editor, certainly instrumental in helping Vampirella get some spotlight in those days. She really enjoyed the medium and the Vampi character.

Ed McGuinness: Nice lady.

Sketch: And now Tom's working with Buffy, he loves his vampires! And knows them well. I remember he had faxed me some of your initial stuff and had nothing but good words and high hopes for you. Well, he has an eye for talent...and so did Mike Chen and a number of other people by the sound of things. Now at this point it seems to be "Greenlight! Greenlight! Greenlight!" for you; how are you doing with things?

Ed McGuinness: At the time I was just doing it as it came, and just happy and excited that I was able to even try this out. They (Harris) liked the samples that I sent them, I think I did about three or four pages. I started my first book with them, which I think was Vampirella Strikes I and II. And I did a few issues on the regular series. It was a lot of fun. And then basically everything kind of happened at once – I came to know the Lord, and I feel that really changed my life and career, that was a big - and great - change for me. And while I was making that change in my life, everything was changing editorially.

Sketch: At Harris?

Ed McGuinness: At Harris. Explosion, you know. Everything just happened at once. So I ended up getting off that book and I just I actually thank God that I got kicked off - because I don't know, man (laughter), some of that stuff was done when I was a totally different person back then, you know?

Sketch: Certainly. A life decision of that type will certainly change things for a person – obviously their outlook on things. I appreciate you being so candid about it.

Ed McGuinness: It changes things, sure. And now it's who I am.

Sketch: Certainly. Again, I appreciate your being so candid. That can be a very personal thing, but please elaborate on it as you wish. That's not something one encounters in this field too often – and least not with your cand or?

Ed McGuinness: Well that happened. And at the same time I basically went down with the ship because Meloney got fired. So did everybody else who was with her, and I was like "Whoa, what's going on?", you know? So I just had my new found Faith and everything and I was just like, "Well, I'm gonna take this and do with it whatever God was going to have me do with it." And that was it. And I was lucky to still have a little bit of that money left over, and it supported me for that time. And then I started doing some samples some samples again, trying to hold my edge for a little bit. And it just so happened that at the time when all that happened the Orlando

convention was in around the next month. It was perfect timing; I was already going to the show anyway. So actually I went to the show and it was kind of weird, I sat at the Harris table and it was weird. And then I had my own table and I was just doing sketches and stuff like that, and Joe Mad was at the show! His work was starting to come out too and it was really cool. I was like, " Wow," 'cause this guy, even though my stuff is different, I can see how he thinks this way or that with certain influences and stuff, pretty similar.

Sketch: You both share some of the anime/ manga feel and look to a degree, right?

Ed McGuinness: Yeah, some of the stuff he was looking at was a lot of the same stuff I was looking at, you know? But it's funny because you and I could look at the same stuff and pick out different things from it. Different references in this, or that being inspired by a Jack Kirby picture of the Hulk, where you might be more interested in the light and shadow while I would be all "look at those round muscles." Everybody sees something different, you know?

But I was able to show some of my stuff to the Marvel contingent at the show on Sunday, some of my Vampi stuff 'cause I had some of those originals as well as some other stuff with me. And some photocopies I sent back were shown to Mark Powers back in New York, and that Monday I got a phone call from Marvel and Mark Powers. He was like, hey, we want to see more of your stuff and we'll send you a script," and everything. So I was thinking, " what a great opportunity." I don't mess around with something like that. New York is 4 hours away. And I had a little extra cash so I took the bus down there in the next morning. I went right in to the Marvel offices and showed my stuff in person – not just pages but sketchbooks and things so they could really see my drawing ability. And they checked me out, and then gave me, I think, 3 scripts, and I had to pick 5 pages to do out of 3 scripts. And when I got back to Boston, I went right to the studio and I was like... I *worked.* On the sixth day I went back in with the 5 pages I wound up doing. I wanted to go in person again, I wanted to make a good impression. And it paid off, I walked out of the offices with the '96 Wolverine annual, so I was like "whoa," and at the point my head was spinning. I was just like, " I can't even believe this," you know?

Sketch: The pressure was on - take us through those days of intense work.

Ed McGuinness: I just sat down and read the scripts, and tried picking out the stuff that I thought would have the most variety. Everybody says to show stuff with a little bit of action, as well as a little bit of character stuff, and a little bit of something else, right? So I sat and I was just trying to put everything I had into it. I was penciling stuff and they gave me some horrible paper and I was just so excited (laughter), I was just doing everything to it. The pencils were like...even when I got down to the feathering, I would actually draw the feathering in as opposed to just indicating it. I mean I went all the way, I gave it everything I had at that time. And I burned a lot of midnight oil.

I walked into Marvel not knowing what was going to happen but still confident. I was coming a long way, especially from Vampi in such a short

time, and all of a sudden it was serious – well the Vampi stuff was serious, but all of a sudden it's like, "It's Marvel, this is Marvel serious."

Sketch: Outside of the respective companies, were you more comfortable with the subject matter of a super hero as opposed to the Vampirella type of material?

Ed McGuinness: When I was doing Vampi I was into it. But like I said, my whole perspective did like a 180. My whole life changed at the point I made a decision about my Faith. Now I look back at that stuff going, "Oh man." It was fun at the time but I can't be doing stuff like that now. At that point I was dating Michelle, who is now my wife, but I was still a single guy doing my thing.

Sketch: Just not your kind of stuff now, that's certainly understandable. For clarity on Sketch readers' part I'd like to mention that ex-wild Ed now has a lovely wife and three lovely children of impressionable ages; 7, 3, and 9 months. And you pointed out that you will only do material that you feel comfortable in sharing with your little ones?

Ed McGuinness: That's been my measuring stick pretty much. If I would feel like I wouldn't want to show my stuff to my kids then I know I'm not interested in working on it.

Sketch: So if Harris or some other company approached you with something along, say, Vampi – or similar – lines, it's something you just definitely would not be interested in due to the subject matter?

Ed McGuinness: I'd just turn it down.

Sketch: "If thine eye offends thee... " eh? I'll be lopping off part of my body you don't even want to know exist, Ed (laughter). Kidding, only – I don't mean to be disrespectful.

Ed McGuinness: That actually brings me to a character that I have, one of my personal things I'm toying with and would like to work on. This guy actually will cut his eye out.

Sketch: Yowtch. One of your own characters? Will this be for DC, or..? I wanted to ask you what you had planned for further up the line; this is a personal project of some kind?

Ed McGuinness: I have a couple of things I'm planning, but I don't know exactly when or how everything is going to completely work out. But I have this thing that I'm tentatively calling The Lion of Judah. It's basically going to be like a big brawl book, but it's going to be taken from the symbolism in Revelations, the last book in the Bible. Actually, the whole thing would be tied in with the book of Daniel and a lot of the imagery and material from the Old Testament as well. I came up with my composite creation, which is like this big man lion representative of the ideas of Christ, and he's white and his mane is on fire with these big paws and stuff. There's a lot more to it, of course, but that's part of it.

Sketch: There are certainly some interesting concepts being thrown into the market right now; that would certainly be one! Nothing in a similar vein comes to my mind at the moment. Have you approached anyone with the project?

Ed McGuinness: Not yet. I've just been basically playing with it – the ideas and the

concepts, and a way of marketing it in some comic type of fashion. I'd like to work with a writer on it, but I need the right writer who...

Sketch: Who would understand what you're wanting to do – have an understanding and feel for the subject matter.

Ed McGuinness: Sure, who understands what I'm after and what I'd like to do, and has knowledge of the source. I'd want it to be accurate with specific things, sure.

Sketch: I don't want to appear crass here, but...obviously you want to "commercialize" things, for lack of a better term? "Commercialize" is maybe not the term to be used here, perhaps, but - you want the book, like any good comic, to be entertaining and eye-catching to draw people in...then be informative, deliver your message? You'd want it to be commercial on that level, to get people interested, involved.

Ed McGuinness: Exactly. There are a lot of things that I'm wresting with right now as to how

7

to do it the right way. I'd be aiming for an older audience but at the same time I want a kid to be able to pick it up and check it out.

Sketch: The success of the Left Behind series of books and movies certainly shows that there's a Christian market that seems interested in entertainment that might seem – what, a little less traditional than someone might expect? I'm not overly familiar, but there are what – three or four of the Left Behind best sellers? And Corbin Bernsen is in at least one of the movies, I think? I just saw him in The Dentist 2.

Ed McGuinness: I don't even know. I mean it's a whole market unto it's own I suppose, but I'm just starting to look into it from that perspective.

Sketch: But again, there would seem to be a large and receptive Christian audience that might be receptive to this type of product?

Ed McGuinness: I don't really care to make it for just Christian people; I don't want to do that at all. I feel that I want to make a book that

anybody would want to read because it's cool, with a great story and cool art, you know? I might have a message behind it, sure. But I want to do it so that if someone doesn't necessarily care for the Biblical element they can still just pike it up and enjoy it and say, "Hey, this is a fun book, a really cool book." And enjoy it.

Sketch: But at the same time a project like this would have to be personally motivated to a fairly high degree? Well, with all that fantastic Biblical imagery as a basis – some of it pretty wild, pretty violent, as you obviously know, Ed...that, coupled with your very cool, arresting visual style; it certainly sounds like an interesting project. I'd love to see what you do with some of the vision and prophecy creatures, the seven seals, all that stuff is very, very visual. I wish you a lot of luck with it.

Back to Metropolis. Take us through a typical workday. Earlier you mentioned that Marvel gave you script pages and you took them home; do you like to work from full script, do you like to work from plot, the famous old Marvel style? Do you have a preference?

Ed McGuinness: I don't know. I've never worked from just plot yet, so I don't know how I would handle it. All the guys I've worked with from Tom to Jeff to Joe Kelly to Joe Casey have given me pretty full scripts, how they like the panels done and stuff, and I take it as suggestions because that guy does his part of the job - my part is to take you from point A where he wants you to point D to the bottom of the page where he wants you, and if I kind of feel the need to take out a panel, add a panel, that's my job.

Sketch: Do you start out with thumbnails, Ed? Or are you one of those guys that can just start moving right out on the actual board?

Ed McGuinness: Yeah. I start out with really small thumbnails, and...well, it depends. Sometimes I do and then sometimes I'll be like, "Well I can't draw what I drew down there so I'll just see what happens on the page" (laughter).

Sketch: Sometimes it's difficult to translate those terrific little gestures into a working figure (laughter).

Ed McGuinness: But when you do those little thumbnails, sometimes there's so much energy in those little things. Yeah, sometimes it's weird tying to translate it. When I was first starting out I used to blow them up all the time, because I could not just transcribe them. I do my thumbnails like two inches by one inch or something, they are tiny. I'll just go in there and gesture things out really, and looking at it you wouldn't be able to tell what was going on in there. And then I'll actually take that and blow it up. Actually, what I used to do was I would go and make a xerox and blow that up and then lightbox it, but the lately I haven't been doing that, I've just been moving from that little one by two inch thing right up to the full size. I basically rough it out and kind of make sure I get the gesture on the big board, then I put that aside and I go and do finishes.

Sketch: Do you like working directly on the board, as opposed to light boxing progressive steps?

Ed McGuinness: I would rather do it right on the board. I used to work with blue pencil but I'd

find that I was building up, drawing things two or three times over, and it was taking a lot longer than it should. And I tend to be heavy handed; I would do it very lightly but then I'd go in heavy with the blue pencil finishes, then I'd go in heavier with the lead finishes actually doing an almost finished drawing two times.

Sketch: Argh, that's a lot of time and work – did that cause a lot of erasure problems for you with the finishes or the board, Ed?

Ed McGuinness: No, actually I really didn't erase too much with the blue pencil 'cause I knew it didn't photocopy, so what I do now is I just use a 4H on the DC paper, which is generally slick. Like if I was working on a Marvel paper I would probably go 3H because their board is a little bit softer, so there's more give. Last time I used it, a 4H would just shred it.

Sketch: Your stuff is full of impact and energy; you use a lot of tight, very controlled blacks throughout your stuff - do you go in and build out all your little width and thickness lines, or do you stay with a fairly standard line and let it go to the inker?

Ed McGuinness: That's exactly that's what I do. I would take my 4H...and like the page I'm working on today, I take my little breakdown, literally just the size of a thumbnail, I just look at it and kind of generalize where the panels are going to be. Not with a ruler, I just go in and kind of width my pencil across the board so I know what my parameters are with it. Then I'll go ahead and I'll very lightly sketch out where I want the figures and I'll do my structural work like you're saying, and just make sure everything is working. Then I'll go ahead and I'll just do my hard pencil work with the same lead. I found what I used to do was go in with a 3H before the 4H to do the rough work, then I'd go in with a 4H over that and do the harder work. But I found that because of the different pencil weight the 3H would actually kind of slide over the 4H, and it was just a different pencil. So what I did was get the 3H out of there, I' m doing the same thing I was doing with the blue pencil. So I just go 4H now, I'll rough it in and then I'll finish it.

Sketch: I haven't had the pleasure of seeing your actual pencils, but do you do all the little feathering and ticking by hand, just as you build out much of your own lines?

Ed McGuinness: I like to indicate my feathering (laughter). One of the things that obviously attracts me with comics is the art angle of it, and like I really get into a line...and it's probably one of my biggest downfalls when it comes to speed, otherwise I could bang out the stuff out so much quicker...but I really get into the work and I like to establish all my line weight and stuff. I gotta go in there (laughter). Inkers might hate me because maybe I'm too controlling about it but – it's not that I don't trust them it's because I enjoy doing it so much!

Sketch: It's what you're into. Just...making a mark that can be really appealing. But that enjoyment is actually a lot of work, it's as though you're inking with your pencil.

Ed McGuinness: Yeah. Well, I use the little "x's" for the blacks. I remember when I started that I thought it would look weird. And then I'd get it back inked, and I was pleased to realize that

I can spot blacks pretty well. I think I have a natural sense for that, just to see how they work on a page without having to go in and work out a pattern or something on the thumbs in the way of an overall page.

Sketch: Do you work all over the page – start maybe with a particular panel and work around it, for instance, or do you start at the upper corner and work down in a more logical progression?

Ed McGuinness: Sometimes… I'll be drawing a page and things just happen. Ill be going down to work on a panel over here and I'll look at this other panel that I haven't been working on 'cause I kind of work on the page all at once. I don't always start with one panel and finish it. That's something maybe I should task myself with more, but the way I do it is I'll kind of work on the whole page at once; I see the whole page as almost one big picture. And that helps me spot my blacks, because…like, I'll see what I've drawn in panel one which is maybe the entire top half of the page and I'll see panel six way down in the bottom, like the right hand corner, and panel 6 may not have enough black in there and I'll just feel that I should put some shadow over there.

Sketch: What kind of equipment do you use, Ed? You have a LexCorp drawing board? Do you have one of those beautiful big LexCorp light tables?

Ed McGuinness: My dad made me this great light box out of an old cabinet. It works great for me; I've had it for like 10 years. It just fits an 11' X 17" page on it. I use it once in awhile - I used to use it a lot more, but like I said, I'm not lightboxing things as much as I used to. Basically I just work on this cheap art table that I've had that cost me like sixty bucks.

Sketch: Your hands and faces are really expressive. Do you use models or photo reference for your figure work or backgrounds?

Ed McGuinness: No, I just do them. I just draw what I think feels right. I don't really reference at all. Which is probably bad.

Sketch:(laughter) No, not at all! But do you use any for things like cars, or buildings or anything then?

Ed McGuinness: I just make it up. The way I look at it is that it's my job is to just make it look real. Like I'm drawing a bank, I need to convince the readers somehow that they are in a bank. And that just means props. I put a picture on the wall that looks like a dollar bill or a money sign or something. Just visual cues, that's the whole thing. Because if I was to really draw what things are…it would take me so long. And my job is just to convince people that they're in an environment. Actually, it's sometimes annoying when I do have to reference. Like when I have to draw the White House. I've drawn the White House at least a hundred times. I could probably draw it from memory now, but I just basically pull stuff right out of my head, because I have a pretty good memory with stuff. So I guess you could say that in a sense I do reference, but I don't do it where I just take a magazine and photos and put them on the table.

Sketch: But you convey all the reality that you need to. All the expressions and substance

necessary are in your head? You can just put it down; it's already there.

Ed McGuinness: I draw in a very unrealistic way anyway. I mean, look at the size of Superman's jaw, his neck is like a paint can. When I was doing the Vampi stuff I had wanted to draw like Adam Hughes, but there was no way I could commit myself to that. That level of drawing …I mean just to be consistent on that level, man, that's work. Look at his stuff, it's so good! And at this point I'm he just does it so naturally and everything…but I decided that if I really want to have longevity as far as personally enjoying this work I want to be consistent and just have fun. And that's what happened, I just lightened up and I didn't try to draw everything ultra-realistic. And now it's kind of coming full circle where I'm getting away from being extremely cartoony and maybe integrating some more realism into things.

Sketch: Your stuff is becoming more and more solid, your figures and faces becoming more individual if you look at the progression of your work just over the last year or so.

Ed McGuinness: I come up with my phony anatomy and everything, but now since I understand it to a greater point I can throw some phony shadow on there to make it not as phony (laughter). It really doesn't work all the time in the "real" sense. But light and shadow really justifies everything on the page in a sense, it makes it real - like you're putting out the most cartoony looking thing, but the lighting makes it "real." That's what makes Toy Story different from a regular cartoon. It's like it's 3D, it's because you have a sense of depth because of what's going on with the light and shadow and the light sources that they are using. Something someone does really accurately; my stuff is just bologna.

Sketch: But lighting is one of the keys that makes your stuff work so convincingly?

Ed McGuinness: Yeah, I think progressively. Yes, because I have always been about shape and form and I really, really like shape and form and how muscles work together. And that's why I've always been a big one on just kind of playing with anatomy and stuff, and I think the more that I play with that and put shadow and stuff on things it pulls more of that form and that shape out, and gives it more of that 3D feeling.

Sketch: There's quite a group of clean, cartoony artists enjoying popularity at the moment that are very anime and manga influenced. Do you find that you're compared to them, or do you feel like you're a part of that crowd?

Ed McGuinness: I have people who have said it to me. It's not like I hate to be put into a box, but it's so funny, because I haven't looked at any of that animated stuff for so long - I think that it's because it was so foundational for me, right from the get-go. When I was in high school I was into all the anime stuff and now it's really grown in popularity, while for me it's just kind of been there on the side, in a sense, for my entire career. But along with plenty of other influences

Sketch: Do you feel a kinship with anyone in the way of look or style?

Ed McGuinness: I don't know. Maybe, I guess, because people always tell me that I look

like this manga guy or the other, and talk about anime influence. I can see it to a certain extent but it's kind of funny, because lately I've been really looking at older guys like Kirby and John Buscema. And that's where a lot of my influences have been coming from lately, maybe that's where you're picking up some of that more realistic stuff you mentioned? I've been looking at Buscema for a lot of his light and shadow, and how he used it to make the body work.

Sketch: An incredible draftsman.

Ed McGuinness: He's just so good, and it's rubbing off on my story telling big time. He's a huge influence. What I try to do is get a balance in there, from down in a little panel to the big splash shot.

Sketch: Is that your favorite thing?

Ed McGuinness: Sure, I love doing it. But at the same time I really like to play with the layout on the page. In certain scenes I'll only bleed the page when something big is happening.

LION OF JUDAH JOSHUAH

IMPERI-EX DESIGNS

MONGAL

PURPLE HAIR (DIFFERENT SHADE AND TENDER THAN COSTUME PURPLE)

COSTUME

CAPE STRAPS

COSTUME

SKIN

COSTUME

COSTUME

SKIN

COSTUME

MORE YELLOW GOLD!

• COSTUME IS PURPLE!
• PURPLE LIPS!
• PURPLE EYES!
• NO BLACK OR GREEN ON COSTUME EXCEPT FOR LEAKAGE STRIPS!

STRONG YET FEMININE!

eMc2x!

Just regular talking scenes I try to have people within the panel borders and I try not to break panel borders too often, so when it actually happens it means something. Like Ma & Pa Kent sitting down with Clark and talking. Or like in Batman, I think issue # 168, I had an entire sequence with the family talking was black bordered. I tried to make you have a sense that you were inside because of the black border, so you felt a little constricted. While they're talking you can maybe play with the expressions and stuff. Then all of a sudden we show Batman, and now it's a bleed panel. There's something extra going on and you want to catch the reader's attention so you try a bleed panel. And then it cuts back to the family and the house and it's an enclosed panel. I just try to play with things like that to try to give it a little bit more of a flow, instead of bleeding every page. I've run into the problem where you'll have a bleed page, and that will be next to another bleed page. And for some stupid reason the panel layout on both pages is similar, so it looks like one big splash page! And it's not, and it ruins the whole thing. So I try to be very conscientious of that as I'm doing a page, I take a page and hold it by the one next to it. "Now if these just so

happen to be in the book next to each other, is there a break?" So the reader can say. "All right, this doesn't actually go into the next page. I'm on this page still." I try to be conscious of some of that stuff, which is sometimes easy to miss. I see so many books doing, or just not being aware, of that sort of thing. It's all about the reader. I want to have them have a good time, to come step into my world for a few minutes and enjoy it. I want them to come off felling like they had a great time.

That was a big spiel, but the whole point is I try to balance it. I will go the extremely exaggerated way when it's called for. Maybe for a comedy scene, or a high action scene, I'll really pull the angle and I'll do a real fish eye or extreme angle or something. And then I try to get more realistic. It's almost like painting over something, a gloss. It's like realistic make-up over a cartoon character. The structure is so goofy and cartoony, but you cover it to a degree with something else.

Sketch: Interesting. There are a number of guys out there right now that seem to share a lot of the anime influence, some of it quite nice: Ale Garza, Phop Mhan – and to some degeree Ferry, Clayton Henry, Barberi, Rouleau. Before the current craze there was a gent named Doug Rice, who did a very fun early-anime type giant robo book called Dynamo Joe, way back in my days at First comics. Gee, I'm showing my undead age status here, aren't I? But Michael Golden, I think, was the real starting point for a lot of that anime type energy. I feel that Golden is truly brilliant, and he was one of the first to really incorporate some of that mangaesque exaggeration in a really exciting, unique style. But you're old-schooling these days...?

Ed McGuinnesss: Definitely. In my opinion, for me, that's where it's at. They started it. I just draw from what they were doing and try to add a little bit of my take on things. The manga, the Disney influences, the Street Fighter stuff. I'm a big fan of that Capcom artwork, stuff of that order. I just try to add that into my repartee because I'm influenced by almost everything I see. So it's crazy, I have a couple main influences, but I'm really influenced by everything I see.

Sketch: Do you check out anything outside of comics in the way of painters, illustrators?

Ed McGuinness: I like that whole entire feel, that graceful feel, of Alphonse Mucha.

Sketch: Again, very design oriented stuff, very elegant - you mentioned Adam Hughes who certainly has a wonderful touch for that kind of thing, just beautiful.

Ed McGuinness: Yeah, I like that, and I love the stuff that Maxfield Parrish did, all the color work. Woof! The stuff is crazy.

Sketch: Do you get the chance to do any of your own color work?

Ed McGuinness: I want to get a computer so I can start messing around with it because it's the only way I can see doing it. In case I mess up....

Sketch: It's certainly a time-saver and, of course, so many options. If you make a mistake, you don't waste all day covering your tracks or repeating yourself.

Ed McGuinness: I do have a pretty good color sense and I eventually want to do an entire book from beginning to end as far as the art angle goes, from the penciling, to the inking, to the coloring. The works.

Sketch: Your stuff translates nicely to color.

Ed McGuinness: If the blacks are placed well, with the proper line weight, it works. I totally think if your blacks are balanced on the page, if the general composition of the page as an entire whole works, it's only going to go that much better in color. That's what I try to look for, just a balance. I'm not afraid to use black, I'll just do it on the whole page, I don't care.

Sketch: It certainly punches it up. The Wally Wood quote, I believe, is, "When it doubt, black it out."

Ed McGuinness: Do you know how many times it saved me (laughter)? It's like there's a section or something in the background, there's a hand or something of this guy punching out at you. You really only care about the person in the foreground. You don't care about the arm behind, so just knock it out. Don't even waste your time trying to figure every knuckle out. Completely throw it in the black in the background and that works. That's one of the reasons that Mike Mignola's stuff works so well. He'll have a single shot of Hell Boy with a completely one color background and his blacks are spotted on the figure so well that it becomes a foreground or middle ground and a background unto itself. It's just really there, you believe it. Even though it's so far from a realistic style its shadow is extremely realistic; it's just amazing. That guy's another big influence on my stuff. Really good.

Sketch: I love that character as well, it's so much fun and the material is just so well done from every angle. Great stuff. Do you collect figures, did you get the Hellboy? And if you're still into garage kits and the like there's a wonderful Hellboy Terada vinyl I'd love to pick up – "Die, Nazi monster!" (laughter). Well, your personal mix of things is really pleasing, Ed – just as eye-catching and enjoyable as it can be, and it seems to really shine on Superman. In a few words, how would you describe your stuff at this point?

Ed McGuinness: I think it comes down to just one word, like having a good time, like "fun". I try to make it as easily readable and enjoyable as I can. I'm having a good time doing it so maybe that's coming through, hopefully that conveys to the reader. The reader to me is the most important person to please. I just want to give something back, to what I was given. As a kid reading comics and even as an adult, now, just kicking out stuff and bringing somebody on a ride.

Sketch: You and I and most guys sat around having a blast with their favorite comic, trying to ape their favorite artist. How does it feel to know there's someone out there right now just ...excited with their latest McGuinness ish, and they're breaking out their 4H and trying to emulate you? Does that ever cross your mind?

Ed McGuinness: Well I'll tell you, it's very fulfilling... it's very fulfilling and it's extremely satisfying. Especially when the market is the way that it is now, because I know the people

who are buying the books are reading them. They're not just saving them, they're actually reading them. So if you get your sales numbers and they're going up a little bit or whatever, you know that your stuff is being looked at, it's not like because there's some buzz on a poly bag book or something.

Sketch: *Right. It's not just speculators, it's people really checking out and enjoying your material. That says a lot for you and your work, Ed.*

Ed McGuinness: It's very satisfying because it just like, "Wow! People are really looking closely at me here, it's Superman." I mean I'm still scared drawing the character... but some people like it, some people hate it, but I'm just happy to be able to do it It's great.

Sketch: *We touched very briefly on computers any opinions on them and their impact on the field?*

Ed McGuinness: I don't know, I like the whole idea of them…but cutting corners and "yanking" and stuff, I'm a total purist in that sense, I don't like that stuff. Having stuff scanned right from the pencils can really be cool, but you're missing out on a whole entire aspect of interpretation. A lot of my stuff goes right through Cam (Smith) No matter how tight I pencil it, he's doing a little bit of his interpretation on it The fun that he may be having is going to come off and make the product even better. There are things that I miss and he just puts in. I don't like the whole idea about computer inking and stuff. I like them for the lettering part of it. You mess up on a word, you just take it off and put a new one on

Sketch: *Cam has been doing great stuff with you, but do you have the urge to do your own inks – actually, you mentioned you'd like to do a whole project of some type all by yourself?*

Ed McGuinness: Oh, yeah, totally. At some point I want to get into the inking aspect of it. But it's another one of those things that I'd probably get so "into it" that I'd take too long to be practical right now. But I can handle myself with a brush pretty well.

Sketch: *What kind of brush do you use?*

Ed McGuinness: I really like to use a Raphael #2 or #3 when I get the chance. They suck up a lot of ink but they hold a really nice point. I've played with that a little bit, but everybody else just kills me with their feathering. I can do it competently, but not to the level of Cam or Jason (Martin) Those guys are just razor sharp.

Sketch: *I know that you're a massive video game fan -- your stuff would seem to lend itself quite naturally to character or toy design, do you have any interests in fields beyond comics at the moment?*

Ed McGuinness: There's some interest you know, people are always talking to me about things (laughter), and some of them sound real interesting I would love to do some of that, sure, but who knows? But comics are definitely it for me, man. As long as there's enough time for the comics because comics are the number one thing

Sketch: *Comics are your main thing.*

Ed McGuinness: Yeah. I'm not in the comics as a temporary thing. I planned on starting them as my career - and someday retiring from – comics I've always loved them. continue to, and don't see ever moving away from them I love 'em too much, and I hope everyone continues to enjoy my stuff as much as I enjoy the books …and just doing them.

BizarroFlint thanks Ed again for his very gracious time and look into his personal life and sketch books under a grueling schedule. And thanks to Super Tom Palmer Jr for just being himself.

Right-Roughes for Superman #171 cover
Below-Finished pencils for Superman #171 cover

ED McGUINNESS'S
S K E T C H   B O O K

In addition to taking out his time and sitting down for an interview, Ed has offered Sketch readers a rare look into his incredible sketchbook. His clean illustrating style on titles such as Superman has made him one of the top illustrating forces in the comic book industry today. So sit back, get comfortable, and enjoy Ed McGuiness's magic krypton-free creative style.

Figures 1 thru 4 shows Ed's process of designing the cover for Superman #157. Notice that fig. 4 the finished pencils is a mirrored version of fig. 3.

Figure 3.

Figure 1.

Figure 2.
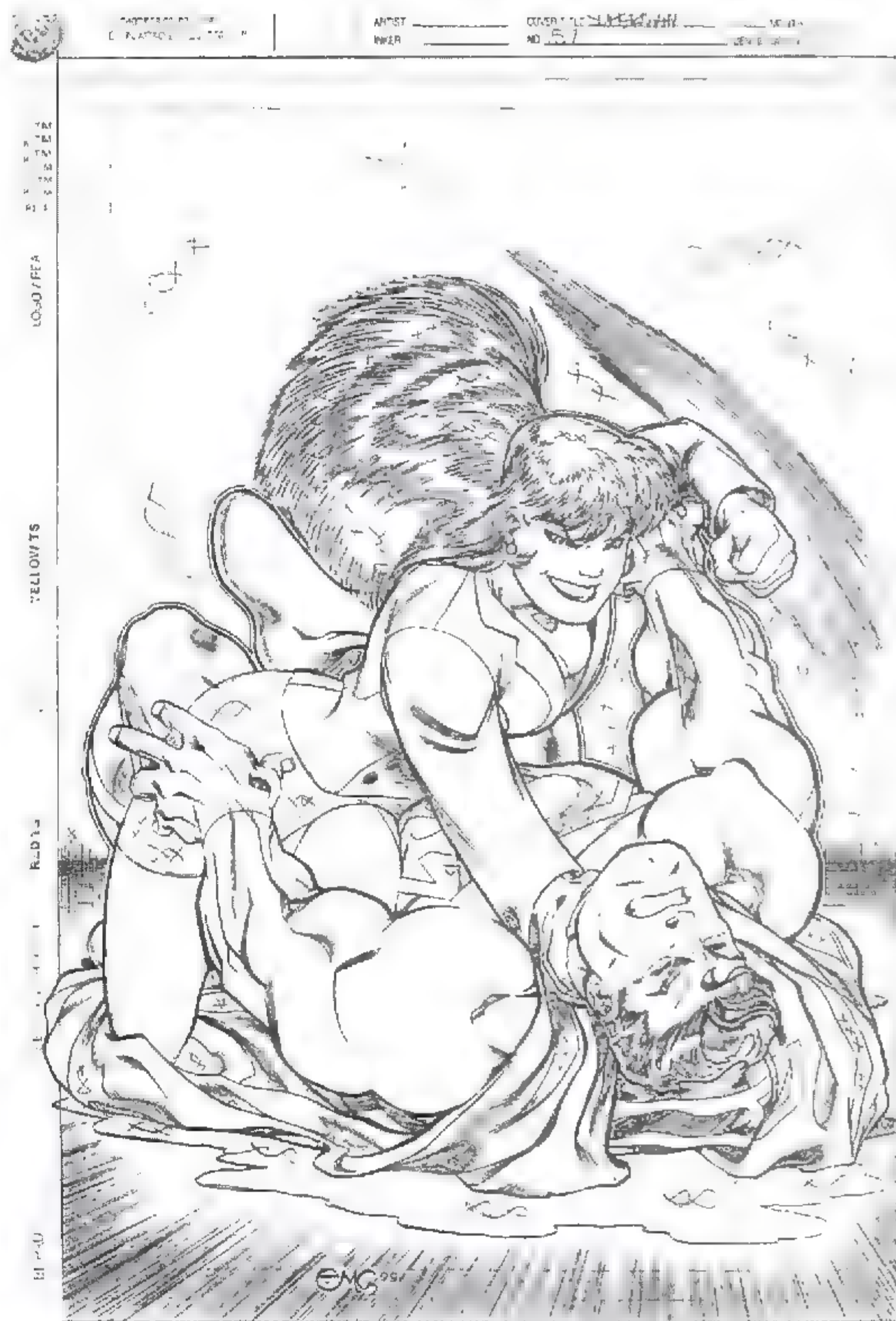
Roughes for Superman #160 cover.

Pencils for Superman #160 cover.
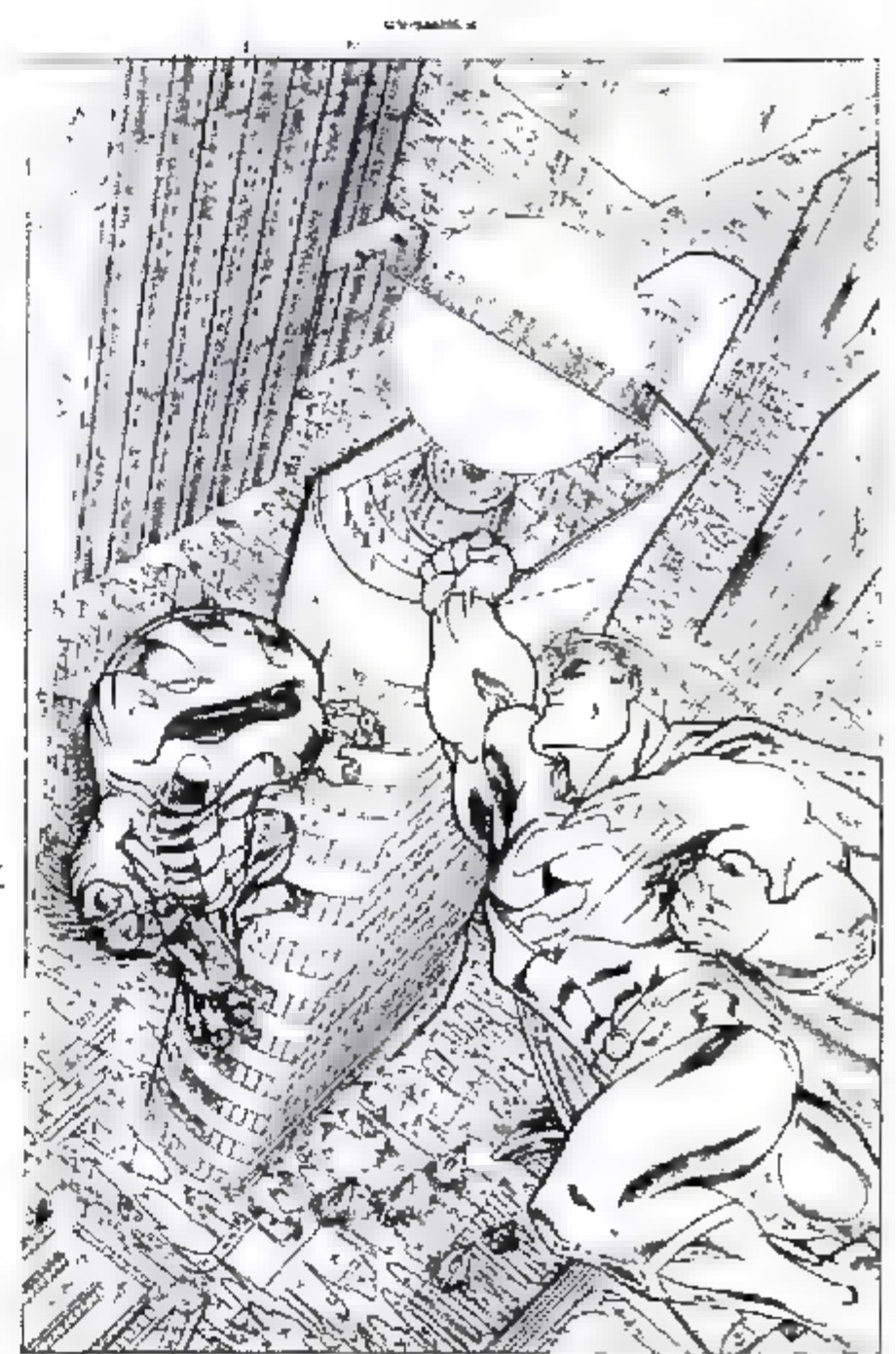
Pencils of a page in Superman #163.

Pencils for Superman #165 cover.
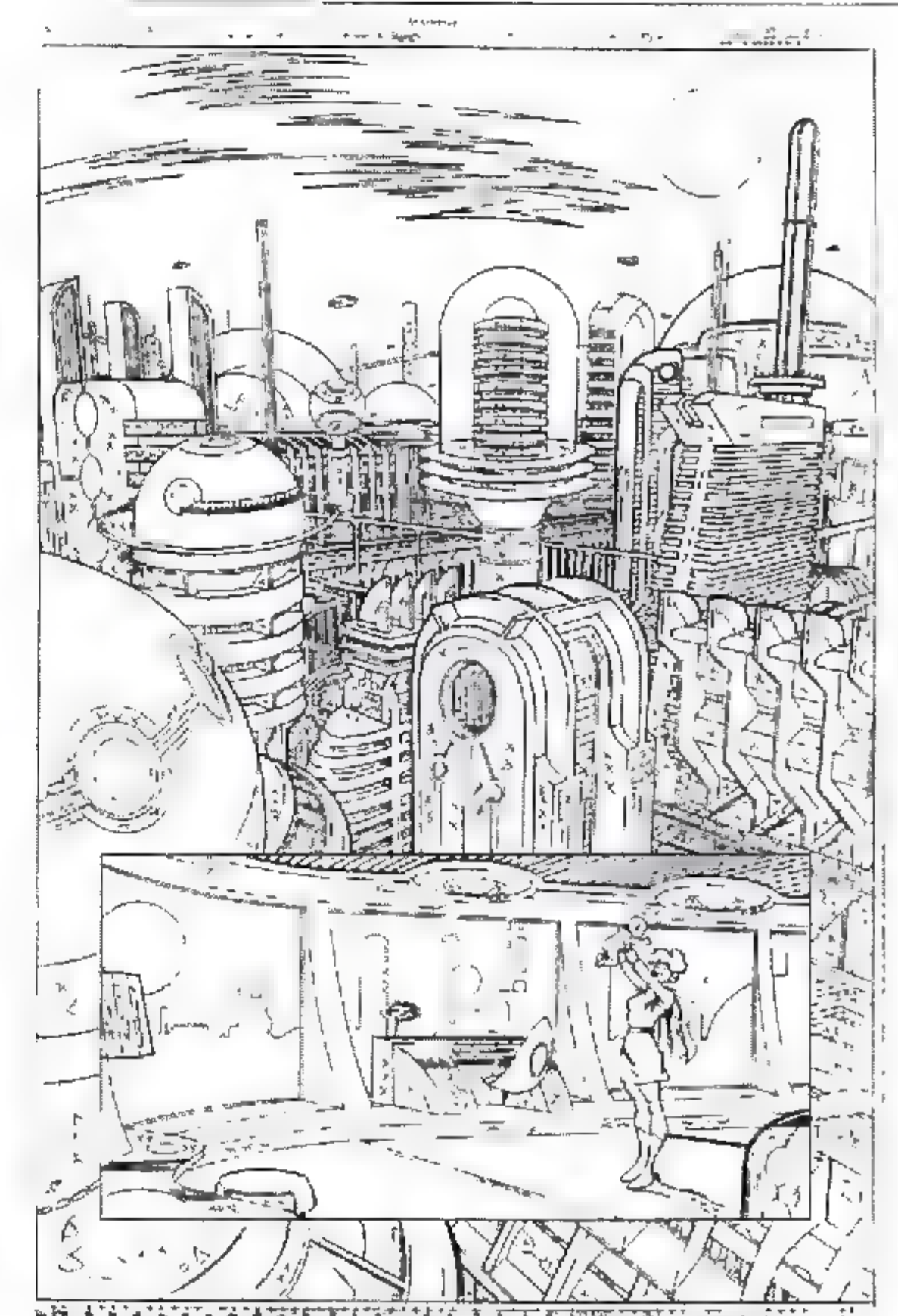
Pencils of a page in Superman #166.

Penciled page from Superman #165.

Finished penciled page from Superman #168.

Finished pencils for Superman #168 page 16

Roughes for Superman #168 cover.

The Universe at Your Finger Tips
Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books

by Tom Bierbaum

Last time we talked about coming up with ideas, so this time let's tackle the far tougher topic of how you develop those great ideas once you've come up with them.

Believe it or not, thinking up the ideas is really the easy part, or at least the fun part. You get there by learning to drop your inhibitions and harness your idiosyncrasies and unique view of the world. But developing those great ideas into complete stories that actually work is kind of the reverse of that process. You're no longer just unleashing the forces of your own mind, you've now got to put yourself into the head of your readers and make your idea work for them It's more conscious and cerebral than the free-flowing, intuitive process of hunting down an inspired idea.

And for the most part, it's just tough, demanding brainwork, with no major tricks or shortcuts (that I know of, anyway). But there are a few tips I can suggest to maybe smooth along the process for you:

DEAD KID © AND ™ 2001 Tom and Mary Bierbaum

1. Learn to tell which of your great ideas really work and which don't.

This is the point in the process where you can save yourself untold heartache down the road by making sure you're building your story on a strong foundation. Mary and I have certainly spent multiple issues struggling to make certain flawed stories work because some of the initial ideas that seemed so promising when they first popped into our heads turned out to have certain defects that we should have identified and corrected from the start.

The best way to test your initial idea is to discuss it with a dispassionate third party. Sometimes an idea can feel great as long as it's inside your head, but once you try to express it, it becomes this hazy, nebulous jumble. Those are the times when your mind has been telling you, "Oh, we can do this great story about (whatever)..." and you get so excited, you don't realize your mind is only telling you it wants to do a great story but hasn't told you how to make it great.

When your mind does that to you, just tell it, "Good thinking And after that, we'll just go down to the playground and start playing basketball like Michael Jordan." Thinking it would be cool to do something isn't the same thing as figuring out *how* to do it.

So discuss your idea with people. If it's a clear, interesting, fun idea when you tell it to them in a couple of sentences — if they hear your idea and think they'd like to read a comic about it   you probably really do have a good idea. But if you find yourself having trouble telling them

exactly what's going to happen or why it's going to be cool, that's a way of finding out before it's too late that you don't yet have the details of a story that works.

And don't expect those details to come to you after you've started working on the story any more than an architect expects a crooked building to start straightening itself out as he starts working on the second and third stories.

2. Keep it simple.

Some of the greatest (and most complex) stories of all time are built on extremely simple but extremely good initial ideas. It's easy and fun to layer on extra characters, plotlines, themes, gags and complications when you have a great basic structure to work with. And it's very difficult to cut back on a complicated story when you find out you can't squeeze all the necessary pieces into the required space.

At this point in the process, be pretty ruthless about cutting out elements that would be fun but don't really fit You can always put them back in later if you end up with extra room and you figure out how to really make them fit. But right now, you risk giving your project a flawed foundation if you insist on including a superfluous, ill-fitting piece.

3. Outline your story.

Start organizing your story and do it on a piece of paper (or on your computer). Don't assume your mind will just spontaneously arrange the events of your story in the ideal manner and order. It may *feel* like you really know how the story is

going to play out, but until you can put it down on paper, the structure doesn't really exist.

And don't just write down words. Comics are visual, so be sketching little ideas for art elements that will make your story grab the readers visually.

4. Concentrate first on making sure you've got a good beginning and a good ending.

As discussed in an earlier column, the opening is crucial because you've got to use it to hook your editor and your readers, and the ending is crucial because you've got to leave those same constituencies happy, or moved, or blown away or in some other way satisfied when they get to the end of your comic so they'll want to be there the next time you tell a tale.

Once you've settled on how to start and how to finish your story, many of the details in between will start working themselves out with little effort on your part

5. For the middle of your story, decide what you're really trying to do and how best to make it happen.

Step back a little and figure out what the key conflicts of your story are, and then organize your story to explore and resolve those conflicts as effectively as possible. Who's trying to get what, and what's stopping them? Then figure out how you can build toward the climax of each key conflict in the most interesting way possible.

When you get a handle on these questions, figure out the bare-bones

essentials you'll need to get your story across and write them down.

6. Scribble down notes in the margins.

You now have a very simple and, we hope, very good skeleton around which to build your story, but don't be afraid to be jotting down little notes on the side whenever you get any idea that would add to, enhance and bring alive your bare-bones outline. These little scribbled notes aren't necessary, important parts of your simple outline. In fact, these are the little tangential notions that are probably not even going to fit into your story.

But they're a part of the process that should continue from here to completion — a constant creation and collection of cool little pieces that just might help you fill in the details of your story So scrawl out dialogue exchanges, ideas for cool captions, jokes, puns, facial expressions, character names, costumes ideas, funny background signs – whatever – so the cool elements that pop into your head throughout the process are down on paper and aren't forgotten. You can and will discard any of these that don't fit, but you never know when you're going to be stumble across that key little golden touch that will lift your story from good to great

7. Indulge yourself.

Now, once you've got your bare-bones outline on paper, one that works and is a sturdy, well-thought-out structure, this is a good stage at which to indulge yourself a little. You've got the key elements in place, so now it's safe to throw in a few really fun or personally satisfying touches that may not be absolutely necessary or particularly to the taste of your intended audience. In other words, before your story gets too filled up, try to include a couple elements that will really make the story fun and personally satisfying for you.

Remember, you *are* supposed to be enjoying yourself. There's no point to working in comics if you aren't. And you' be surprised how often that little fun touch you put in just for you becomes the favorite

element for a lot of your readers. When you have fun, the readers have fun.

8. Weed out the ideas that aren't working.

About this time, you'd better take another hard look at your ideas, because pretty soon you're going to have a complicated story developing and now may be your last chance to correct any major structural flaws.

For example, by this point, you're going to find certain ideas just aren't leading anywhere. A great idea isn't really great unless it leads to other great ideas. And if what started out as a great idea is just sitting there not moving you forward to a deeper, richer story, it's just not right for what you're trying to do.

This is also the point at which some flawed stories will start driving you crazy because you just can't quite get the pieces to fit together, or if you do somehow manage to cram them together, they just don't "sing" to you.

Or maybe the characters are getting antsy and starting to tell you they just wouldn't do the things you're asking them to do in your story. (That's how we and Keith Giffen used to feel about the Legion characters — they were such flesh and blood people to us that when we tried to do something with them that was out of character, we could feel them actually telling us they wouldn't do it.)

If these things are happening to you, this is the time to either drop the story altogether (keeping a note of it around so you have it available for possible future use), or to sit down and do some very hard, candid analysis of what's wrong with your idea so you can figure out the hard but necessary changes needed to salvage things.

Sometimes all it takes is a little simplification identify the part that's presenting the problem and get rid of it. Sometimes you may discover you, or

someone else, is trying to make the story be something it doesn't want to be And sometimes you realize you're trying to do a story that you yourself wouldn't enjoy reading, so there's just no spark of inspiration behind it.

Whatever the case, be tough on yourself at this point and keep at it till you have a story structure that really works for you, or admit it's time to start over with a fresh idea.

9. Avoid the obvious.

Now it's time to start really filling in the details of your story outline, and time to remember one of the most important guidelines of any good writing — avoid doing the first thing that pops into your head, since that's likely what the reader will expect.

Good drama and good comedy rely on the element of surprise. People get bored in a hurry if they can see what's coming long before it gets there. So make sure you surprise yourself once or twice as you structure your story, so the reader will be surprised.

In my other incarnation as a reporter, I was once fortunate enough to interview some of the creators of The Simpsons, and one thing they stressed that's stuck with me is that a good script should be unpredictable. The next time you see a Simpsons episode for the first time, watch the opening three or four minutes and then challenge yourself to guess where the rest of the show is headed (without checking the TV Guide ads or the promotional blurbs). Nine time out of ten, you're not going to be able to anticipate what they've got up their sleeves. That's one of the joys of being a Simpsons fan — forever being surprised by where their stories go. And you can give your readers that same kind of joy by working real elements of surprise into your story structures.

10. To further define your story's details, treat each necessary scene like a little self-contained drama.

Find a way to get from each point A to each point B in a way that is, in and of itself, interesting, different and entertaining. And keep it accessible, so that each scene has something to grab the reader even if he doesn't know or understand who the characters are, or what the overall story is.

How do you do that?

Maybe it's as simple as coming up with a clever setting for your fight scene, say, a lingerie factory or how about a warehouse where they store all those Bob's Big Boy statues? (remember, at all times, think visual.)
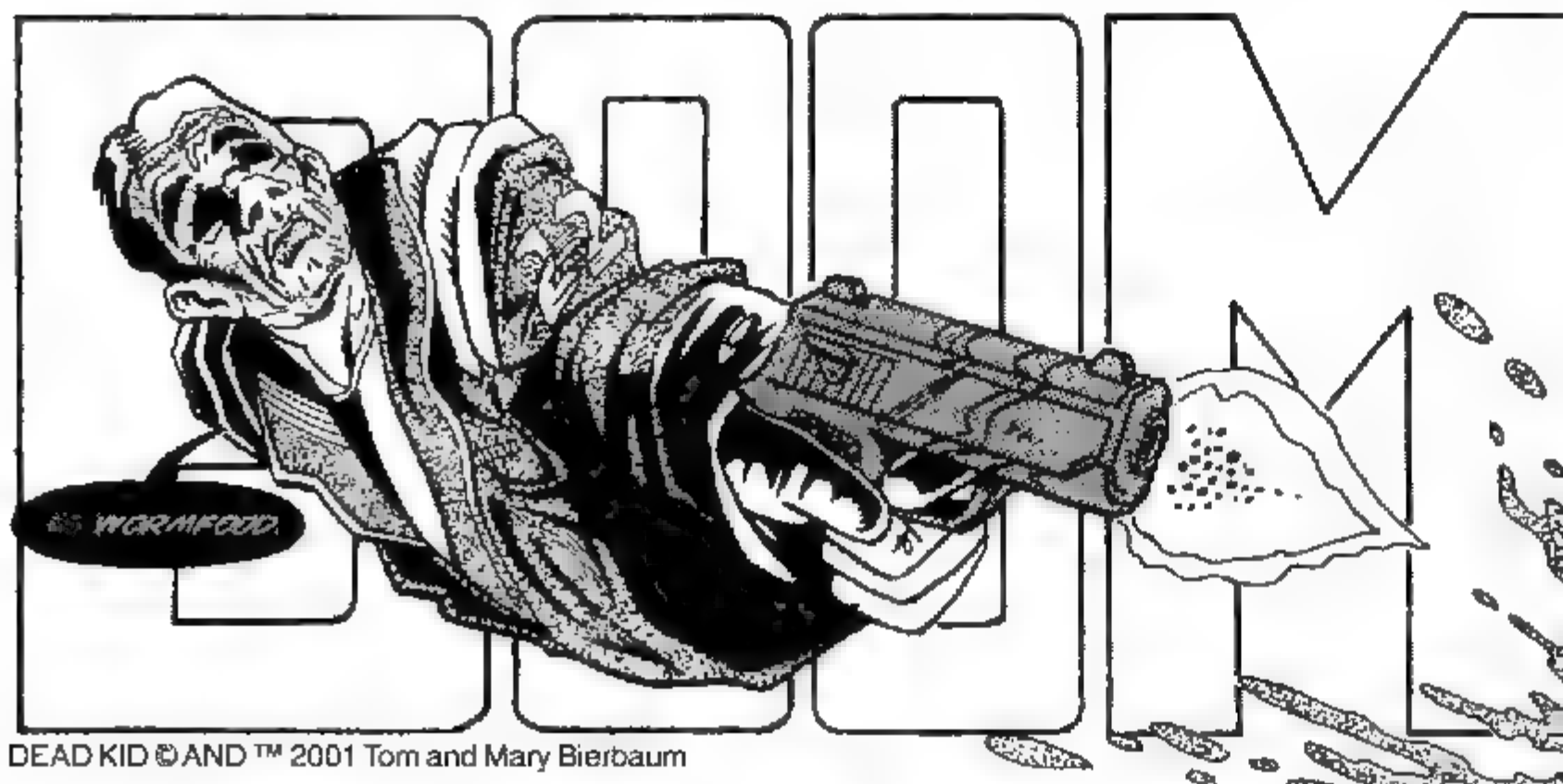
DEAD KID © AND ™ 2001 Tom and Mary Bierbaum

DEAD KID © AND ™ 2001 Tom and Mary Bierbaum

Or maybe you can come up with a really resourceful way your hero defeats the antagonist in that particular scene. Maybe he ends up using some particularly mundane object, like distracting the adversary by popping bubble wrap or using a "clapper" to turn off the lights just when the bad guys have our hero cornered. Or he uses the adversary's strength against him. Or makes him so mad, he loses his composure (if you ever get the chance to read the old Giffen/T&M comic The Heckler, note that in the six or seven issues we d.d, our hero never threw a bunch — he just drove the villains batty with his insults till they defeated themselves).

Or spice up a mundane scene by inserting some really oddball character where the readers wouldn't expect it. Watch an old Dragnet and see how their incidental characters capture the everyday oddities of average folk to keep you entertained through the most routine scenes of police questioning. And the oddballs in your stories don't have to be comic relief They can be spooky or menacing or grotesque or whatever helps your story along. Make your people interesting and real, based on the interesting and real people you observe in life, and you'll bring life to a scene that could otherwise be just a boring little piece of plot business

Or borrow elements from a favorite comedy routine to surprise the reader with an unexpected humorous angle. One time we had to write an entry in a Legion Sourcebook to dramatize the fact that the character Tenzil Kem had been dismissed from his planet's Parliament after a colorful, iconoclastic term of service, so we borrowed a Monty Python bit where they manage to turn an "apology" into a savage insult ("...I most sincerely apologize if I've ever in any way implied, Madam Chairwoman, that you're a manipulative, backdoor-dealing, power-mongering conspirator .").

Or think back to some old movie (stay away from the movies most comic readers are overly familiar with) and imitate the elements and structures of some of their most successful, most satisfying scenes. Watch the original Star Wars sometime and observe how Lucas really strung together a lot of classic old-movie scenes to tell his story Do the same thing with your story, so that every scene is fun, entertaining, involving, compelling or in some other way makes even people who don't like your characters or overall story enjoy the process of finding out what comes next.

Play with point of view, so that an otherwise dull, expositional, necessary scene adds depth to your world. In other words, have the necessary information come from something like a newscast, newspaper clipping, mob informant, witness account, a sidekick's tall tale or an argument about what really happened.

Try to come up with an emotional hook for your different scenes, so the reader identifies and empathizes with somebody in each scene and roots for them, or is scared of what might happen to them, or can say, "Boy, I've sure been there."

Through these kind of tactics and anything else you can think of, make every scene in some little way something that's creative, interesting and surprising.

11. Figure out the space you have to work with and start adapting your outline so the story will fit into that space.

By now, your outline is probably getting pretty detailed, so it's time to divide up all those cool scenes, figure out how many pages they'll take and find a way to make it all fit. Remember especially to reserve plenty of space for a powerful opening and closing.

Again, you can include sketches of possible page layouts or key junctures like splash pages or double-page spreads. Start envisioning and feeling how your ideas are going to end up looking in comic book form.

12. Remain flexible.

At all points throughout the process, if a better idea occurs to you, be flexible enough and ambitious enough to get rid of an old idea to make way for a cool, new one (remember, though, that if you've already submitted something to an editor and had it approved, it's too late to make such a change unless the editor agrees to the alteration).

Take care, of course, not to make a change that damages your overall structure. It's really a big chore late in the game to make a key change and think through and address all the consequences of that change. But if the new idea is good enough, do that work, and you'll have a better, more surprising story.

In fact, *make* yourself change some key element late in the process to something stimulating and unexpected. This way, just when you've gotten sick to death of this story you've been laboring over for days, weeks or months, it's suddenly new and fresh.

So change the motivation of a key player in your story, or switch the gender of a character, or redeem a character who'd previously been despicable, or turn a comic-relief character into a super-competent character (or vice versa), or have two characters who can't stand each other fall in love (or vice versa).

By this point, if you've had a little luck along the way, you should have a strong story, based on a great initial idea, packed with plenty of surprises and lots of lively, involving scenes.

As you've discovered, turning a good idea into a good story is a heck of a lot of hard work, but when everything comes together, boy, it feels good.

So now take a break and relax a little. You've earned it.

Tom
tom@bluelinepro com

eComics:

The e-Path Not Taken
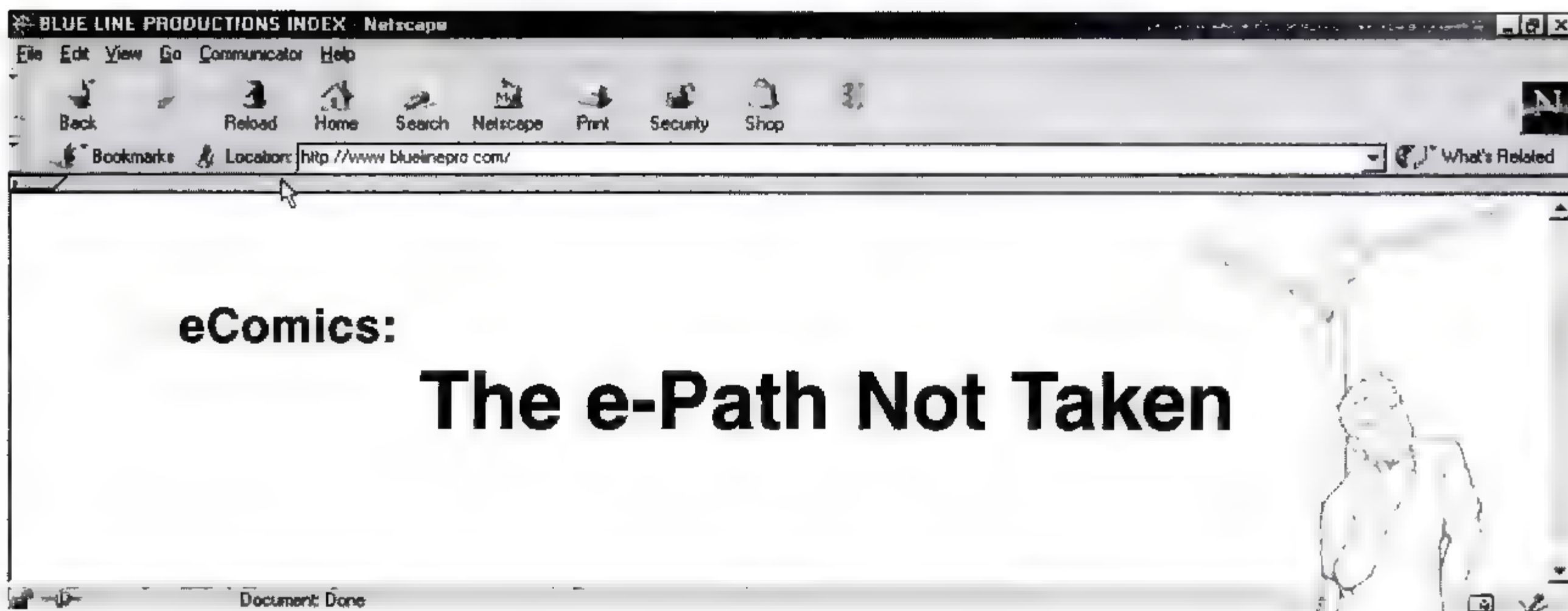
by Mike Maydak
artwork by Kurt Einhaus

A summer breeze rustles though the thick foliage of heat brazened trees as you stand in the lush valley of a reviving comic book market. You take in your surroundings with senses wide-open to the awe-inspiring site, not wanting to miss one moment of the spectacle. The aroma of drying ink from the pet als of freshly printed pages fills your nostrils, tickling your smell with delight. People around you plow though open fields of harvest ready comics. They twirl madly about from side to side in the wind, singing the theme songs to The Sound of Music. Ah yes, good times, good times indeed.

Well enjoy them while you can. As a creator, you have better things to do in this surreal world. Let all the fan boys and "wanna be's" linger about to pick their noses and scratch their butts. You have places to go and people to meet. With a quick drink from the Convention Café to fuel your drive, you grab a map on your way out, heading off on your journey. A journey that will take you to the yellow brick road of the three self's: -reliance, -worth, -publishing ...and, hopefully, beyond.

Walking on this worn path, you wonder how many have come before you. What were their dreams, goals and aspirations? Were they able to catch up with their expectations, or did their ambition catch up with them? Did their ideas and skills taxi them down the long stretch of road, or did they have to hitchhike with somebody generous enough to offer a helping hand? How many walked the trek solely on their own two blistered feet? What about the others? How many... turned around .. or sat stuck and broken down along the way? You dare not shed a look at the sun-bleached skeletons of forgotten concepts and ventures that litter the landscape. Their chaotic scattering only goes to reinforce your worst fears.

Briefly stricken by the severity of your task, you begin to question your headstrong expedition. What am I doing? Am I crazy? Who would want to read a comic about a guy bitten by a radioactive spider? Your palm repeatedly slaps your forehead as you mutter, "dumb, dumb, dumb."

You almost lose any hope of revival, when suddenly your weary attention is caught by something on the distant horizon. New life churns within your creative soul as your curiosity overtakes your sense of wonder. The pace quickens as you dive to apply a closer inspection. In moments you are upon it, Coming to a stop, you find yourself at a fork in the trail.

To your right you see a well traveled path that looks inviting and secure. The atmosphere seems familiar and the sunshine seems to shine just a bit brighter. The intoxicating aroma of a printing press seeps from the path's direction, lingering about and tempting you to follow. Looking further down the scenery changes, warping itself into a vast towering labyrinth of a metropolis. The names of the signature comic publishers blaze across the sky in colossal neon lights. Dark clouds of stagnation anchors themselves at the base, bleeding into the established roots of the city. "Wowzers," you say to yourself, "one could be easily lost among the hustle and bustle of such a large place." Awe stricken, you look towards your alternative path.

Before you lay a trail that disappears into a vast misty jungle of untapped opportunities, a stark contrast to the civilized institute of explored commodities moments ago. Unknown creatures of electronic distribution lurk in the shadows, peering at you with bright digitized eyes, waiting to see your actions. Their sharp teeth shine at you despite the lack of light, thirsting for the taste of bravado and experimentation. The sight sends a chill to the core of your bones, leaving you shaking violently in your boots. How many have gone in there and never come out? What horrors await me in there? Before your terror can overcome you and send you crying back to mama, the mist breaks beyond the jungle and reveals a sparkling meadow. Rays of sunlight break through the barricade of clouds and rain upon the exotic oasis, illuminating the treasures to be claimed. You find yourself entranced with the beauty of the sight. If only I could make it though that wretched forest, I'd be set. Looking back at the path you bite your lip as you assess the challenges. No doubt a maze of formats and mediums awaits you, allowing you many options and paths to your goals - as well as to traps fatal to your ambitions.

Still stranded in thought at the crossroads, you look back and forth at the two routes before you. You pat yourself on the back, reassuring your confidence, for you realize it's time... it's time to make a choice.

Despite my elongated variation of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and my brash symbolism, making a choice is what this all really comes down to. With choices come risks. With risks come potential rewards. In this realm of eComics, there are plenty of choices, risks, and rewards. The amounts are limitless. The new medium of electronic publishing is a creature all its own. There are no rules or regulations that limit the creativity of those who wish to dabble in this art. The idea that the new will be like the old is a false claim. How comics are done now as a printed publication should only have a minimum effect in the beginning on how they are published electronically. Instead, the old will be like the new. It's called a media bias. When you take something from an old medium
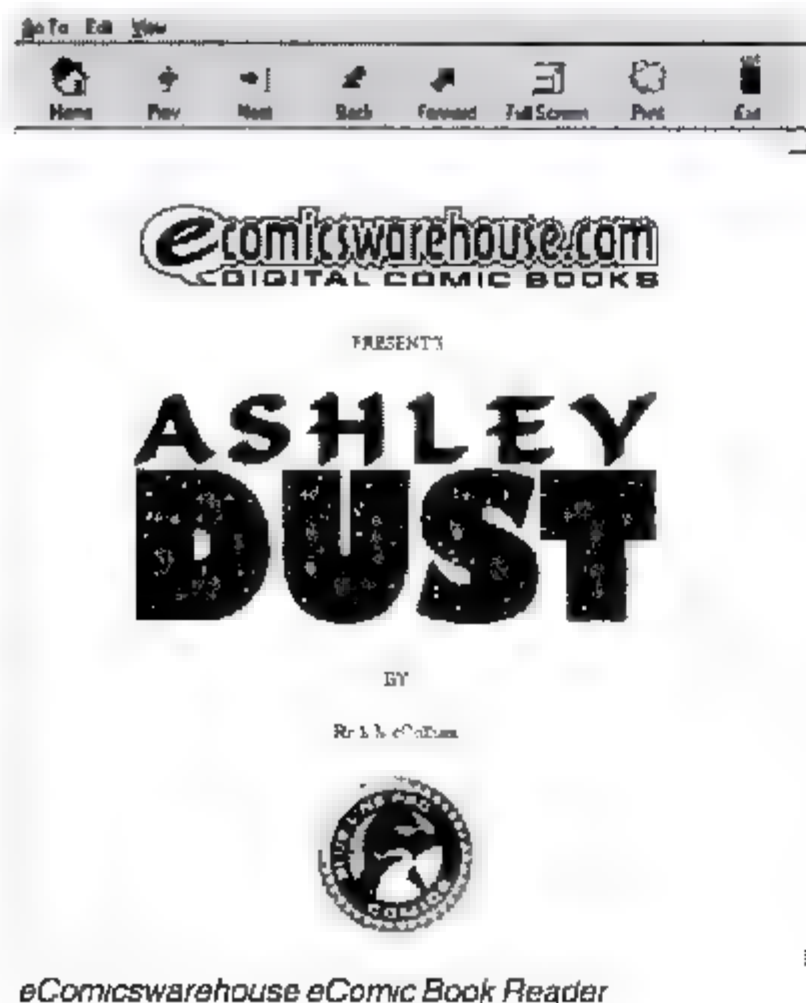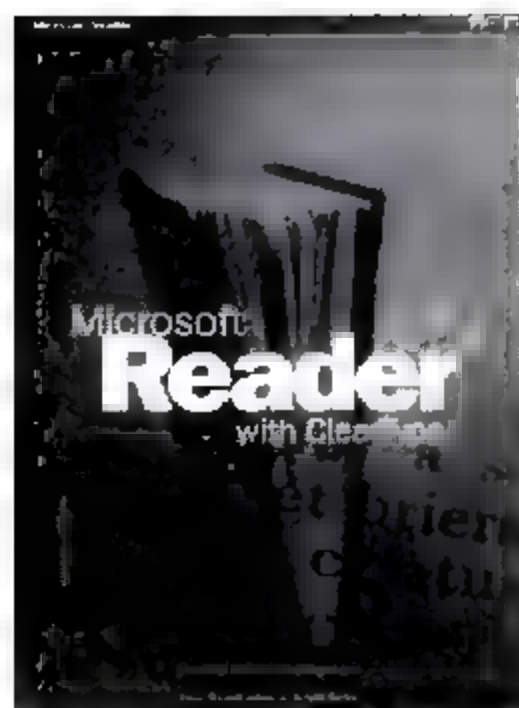
Microsoft's Ebook Reader

and place it into a new medium, it becomes part of the new. The way it is presented affects how it will be received, thus creating a different reaction to it. In the big picture of things, this concept applies to all kinds of materials, publications, broadcasts, and other mediums, not just comics.

I know what I say might rustle some feathers, but the transition will be slow enough not to slam any body in the face. It's not like a veteran that has been working in the field for decades is going to wake up one day and suddenly find his beloved medium transformed to the point he can no longer recognize it. Change may seem so fast when you look back in the history books, but in real life change has to follow the rules of real time, allowing most people a period to catch up so they're not left behind.

This brings me to the current state of electronic comics and their application on the world-wide-web. As the first means to digitally publish content and distribute to mass audiences, posting comics on the web has served as a vital first step in eComic publishing. But with new distribution capabilities on the horizon, the current role of web-sites and their content will need a reassessment.

Many creators are using web sites as a way to gain some recognition and to say that they're actually published. In the end, though, what good is it? You still end up where you started, and without a cent for your efforts (though the comic public may be more aware of your name).

Rather then using the web to hand out free copies of your content, use it to promote your book in a different form, a regulated eComic. Think of it as a huge roadside Crackle Barrel billboard that leads hungry fans your way. Post samples of what your eComic can offer. Allow your content, just a small part of it, to sell your book. I know I'm not saying anything revolutionary, but sometimes the most obvious aspects some how creep under the radar.

There are a lot of amazing things being done out on the net with this media. So much that it's hard to stay on top of all the new innovation being done every day. All I'm saying is there has to be a stop to the thinking that the web means data is free. Creators, big and small, need to start getting some recognition for their work in cold hard capital. One person can't change this way of reasoning, it will take everyone united to reform the current outlook on the value of data. As for the future of HTML, an open format available to nearly every computer in the world, well...the future looks bright. I'm no HTML expert, but from what I know, anybody can learn it and browsers can be customized as specific viewers, making it an excellent system to base

e-publishing formats. There are currently a few HTML eBook compilers on the web.

One of these compilers I looked at is called the eBook Creator. The ebook creator offers a simple and effective way to format content, especially heavy illustration (a.k.a comics), into a ready-to-distribute eComic. Your options are limited but to the point, making the construction process relatively easy. You also have the options to build in password security on either the whole thing or selected pages (especially useful when you want to give away the first couple pages as a preview).

The principles for designing the content for your eComic are the same as designing web pages. Having a method of creating web pages is a must (FrontPage or Notebook), with the only limit to your creativity being the level of your HTML understanding. Anything that can be done on a webpage can be done in your eComic, even the application of Flash animations. Though it may not solve the distribution issue, it does provide a solid format to launch a standardized comic media. Listed for the price of $79.95, you should be lucky enough to catch it on sale for 50% to 75% of that price. Either way, if you have plans to use the software, then it's worth the investment.

There are other eBook compiler formats on the market, most notable by big names such as Microsoft and Adobe. With these stable companies a creator could find peace of mind in the security of a well-known name, using it as a selling point for their content.

The compiler used for Microsoft Reader files is the Microsoft ReaderWorks. From my experience and others, Microsoft Reader is geared towards text files. With ClearType technology and wrap-around "smart" text features, there seems to have been some forfeit of more graphic-oriented features. Comic creators will want to stay away from this one for at least the time being.

The second "big name" is a lot more graphics friendly. Adobe uses the Acrobat program to format content into ready-to-convert files (PDFs). Key word here, **convert**. The only way to convert your content to an Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader file is to go though their Content Server... you guessed it, it's going to cost you, up front and percentages

The advantages to this are the server's distribution and security capability, along with a big name like Adobe to attach to your book. The first way to obtain these options is to pay an up front fee of $5,000 to have direct access to the server. This will save you some of the administration fees and middleman cost. Secondly, you could use a Content Server broker, such as Lighting Source or an eBook publisher, and use their access to the server and other features while paying a series of setup and conversion fees (as well as some hidden charges you have to be aware of). The method you take greatly depends on the level of business you plan to achieve. But remember, there is always a risk that your plans won't go according to plan. So be careful. There is a lot of investment this way.

I'm not saying Adobe is not the way to go. On the contrary, the graphic oriented programs of Adobe are an excellent choice for digital comics, especially the document construction of Abode Acrobat program. PDF files can be viewed across different platforms and are very versatile.

Check out E-COMICS CREATION FOR ADOBE ACROBAT by Nick Pendleton (a.k.a. Klaus) for a comprehensive "how to" on compiling e-Comics. Klaus shares his experience in taking his comic SUPER GRAPE and turning it digital with Adobe Acrobat, supplying the "what to do's" and, perhaps more important, "what-not-to-do's". As one of the brave souls that have forged ahead in this new industry, he has some very interesting things to say.

M2
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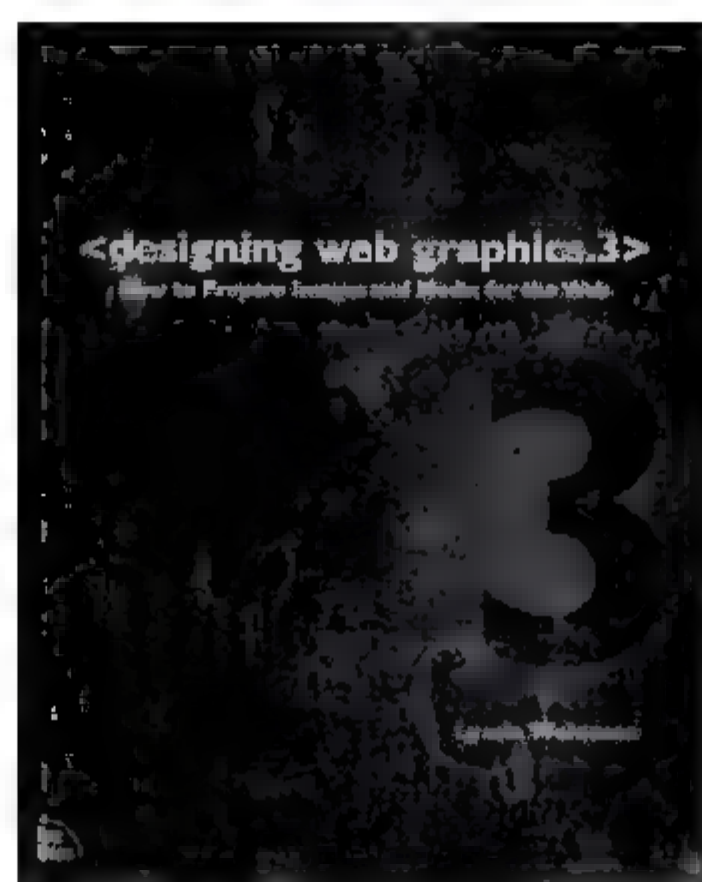
<designing web graphics.3>
How to Prepare Images and Media for the Web
Reviewed back in the pages of Sketch #3, this book by Lynda Weinman deserves another mention for its extensive resource potential on the area of web graphic design. Many of the graphical aspects covered by Lynda can be perfectly applied to the media of eComics. With the understanding of the relationship between HTML and graphics provided by this book, an eComic creator's options are limitless.

Microsoft FrontPage 2000
With the use of Microsoft FrontPage 2000, tedious HTML writing is transformed into a point and click paradise. Designing pages and graphic layouts that would normally take an hour to write can be done in a manner of minutes. With easy to use management windows, FrontPage takes the arduous task of compiling a large web site (or eComic) and turns it into a well-organized, fine tuned production machine.

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How to Draw . . .
Guns

By Jason Howard

To be a comic book artist you have to be able to draw a wide variety of things: people, cars, trees, buildings, guns and any other crazy thing a writer can think of. Anything that is not convincingly drawn will pull the reader out of the reality of the story and make them notice how messed up your art looks. Not good! If you are drawing a panel where Mr. Hero is pointing to the sky at the attacking alien armada, you want the reader to feel the danger of the moment, not wonder why Mr. Hero's hand looks like it is broken at the wrist. Your art is a servant to the story; the whole point of a comic book is to tell a story. What you draw should enhance the story, make it clear, exciting, dynamic, emotional, but never hinder it.

In this article I will show you the process that I go through to draw guns. Along the way I will also tell you some of the things that I have done to help me grow as an artist and get a good understanding of how to draw a cool gun. I'm not saying that this is the only way, it's just the way that has worked for me. For those who pay attention, you may recognize that many of the principles that I will be talking about apply to drawing in general, not just drawing guns, although guns are the example I'll use today. There are no short-term solutions, without doing the work you won't get the reward. It is well worth investing a little time really learning how to draw a gun than to struggle with "faking it" all the time. So let's get started!

#1 Learn what a gun looks like.

This may seem obvious, but it is the most important part. The best way to really learn what something looks like is to draw it. Since we are taking about drawing guns we need to know what a real gun looks like. That means we need reference. Real world reference, so close the comic books (sorry, I know it's painful.)

The ideal thing to use as reference for drawing a gun is a gun. So your next step should be to go out and buy a few guns to use for reference. However, that can get expensive, plus many of the really cool looking guns are illegal. A little more practical and much less expensive option (and one that your Mom would probably be happier with) is photo reference. The magazine section at your local bookstore is a wealth of visual information. Flip through a couple issues of *Guns and Ammo*, find one with some good pictures, and buy it. The Internet is very helpful as well. Each branch of the U.S. Military has a website, and on their sites they have sections with photos. You will undoubtedly find good gun reference there.
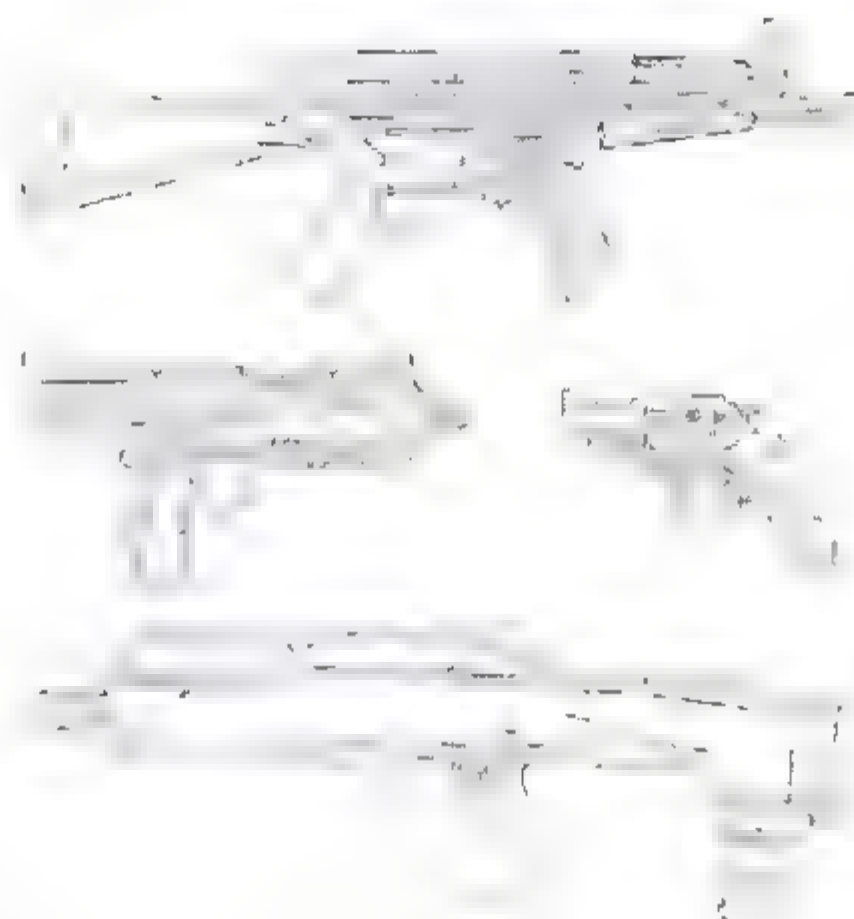
Assorted Guns by Jason Howard

Once you have gathered your reference, the real fun begins! Grab your sketchbook and draw the gun, I mean really draw it. Draw every line, every screw, every detail of the gun. Draw the texture on the grip, draw the way the light hits the barrel, just draw the heck out of the gun. Don't worry if it takes you a while, invest the time and do it right. Fill a few pages of your sketchbook with these gun drawings. Draw until you start to understand how the guns are put together. These drawings will serve as the raw information that your memory will use to pull from the next time you draw a gun from your imagination. The more you put into them, the more you will get out.

Now I am not saying that in your comic pages you must draw ultra realistic guns, each one based on a photograph (not that there would be anything wrong with that). What I am saying is that anything you draw should look convincing. It may not be 100% accurate to reality, but it should look "right." The above exercise will begin to help you understand how guns are put together, and what they really look like. Understanding what a realistically drawn real gun looks like will make any simplification or stylization you do much more accurate. You will be basing your interpretation on reality, not on another artist's interpretation of reality. Also, because you will know some basic things about how a gun works, when you design and create guns from your imagination you will be able to add those extra touches that make them more believable.
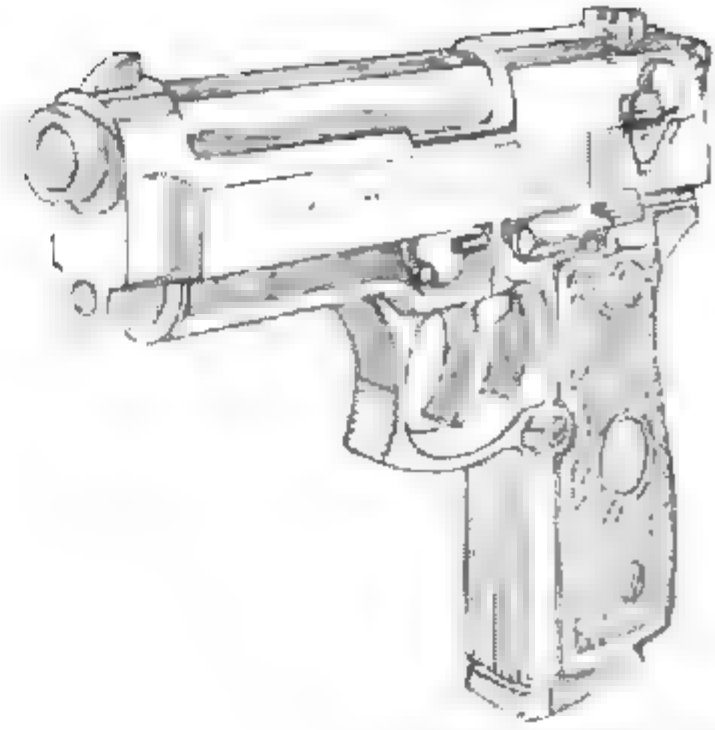
Step by Step Berretta 9MM Illustration by Jason Howard

#2 Break it down

After you have invested some time in really learning what a real gun looks like, you will greatly improve your ability to draw one from your imagination. Like most things you draw, guns can easily be broken down into simple shapes. Look back over some of the gun drawings in your sketchbook and identify the basic simple shapes they are constructed from. These simple shapes are the keys to drawing. Using these shapes makes it much easier to determine the position and structure of the gun, before adding all your cool detail. This is important; you may have a style that is very simplified and cartoony, or one that is very realistic. If the structure is wrong then it doesn't matter what you do on top, the drawing

won't look quite right. Conversely, if the structure is solid, the drawing will look believable and convincing even if your art is very stylized.

Use the simple shapes to determine the angle and perspective of the gun. It is easy to erase and redraw a rectangle and cylinder. However, after you have added all the details, shadows and rendering, you probably wouldn't want to erase it all just to change the position of the gun, and then draw it all over again (although it would make great practice!) As you draw more and more you will become comfortable with how the shapes work and how to translate these simple shapes into cool looking guns.

In your comic pages, the level of finished detail and the manner in which you render the surface of the gun is an area where I have found that looking at other artists can be helpful. There is a tough balance to strike here. It is important to develop your own style, and not rip off other artists - however, everyone is influenced by someone, and it can help you learn how to solve certain drawing problems by looking at how other artists solved those same problems. The important thing is that you first have a good understanding of reality (in this case, guns), and then look to see how other artists interpret that same reality. That way you are making intelligent decisions about your drawing and are not just duplicating the mistakes of others.

Step by Step M-16 Illustration by Jason Howard

#3 The hand

The human body reacts to its environment. When drawing guns, it is important to be aware of how people hold guns. Things like how the hand wraps around the grip, where the trigger finger goes, and what happens to the thumb. The gun magazines will help you here also. Look through them for good photos of people holding guns, and draw them. Again, the more you put into these drawings, the more you will get out.

Another excellent yet inexpensive alternative to buying a real gun for reference is to buy a toy gun. Use this toy gun for hand reference. Years ago I bought an orange and green squirt gun. This squirt gun is a replica of a Berreta 9mm handgun. I used to use it to squirt my sisters, but now I use it to draw from (my sisters much prefer it's new use). It gets used ALL THE TIME. I have a permanent place for it in my drawing studio. Anytime that I am drawing a gun and I can't figure the hand position out I grab my orange and green squirt gun, and by looking at how my own hand holds the gun, figure out my drawing. I have since bought a real Berreta 9mm, but I still use my squirt gun for my hand reference. It's a lot less painful if I accidentally shoot myself with a squirt gun.

#4 The extras

If the character in your comic has a gun, chances are there will be other related equipment that you will need to know how to draw. Things like ammunition, a holster for the gun, a scope, etc. Again, the gun magazines should help you here. Don't disregard these details, doing a little extra work

and including them will really make a big difference. For example, when a semi-automatic handgun is fired, the gun automatically ejects the spent cartridges. Drawing these casings flying through the air will add an excellent bit of realism to your drawings. Plus they look really cool. Also, contrary to most action movies, a gun can only hold a limited number of bullets. Showing the character reloading his weapon is another great way to add an extra touch to the story, and give a little more weight or importance to the times when the gun is actually fired.

Speaking of firing a gun...for those who don't know, I'll give you the quick version of how a real gun works. What you see as an unfired bullet is really a shell or casing that holds the actual bullet and gunpowder. When the bullet is in the gun and the trigger is pulled, a mechanism of the gun strikes the casing, causing the gunpowder to explode. This explosion forces the actual bullet (usually a piece of lead, hence the phrase "slinging lead") down the barrel of the gun and out the end towards it's target. The explosion also exits the end of the barrel, creating a flash of light. Understanding this process will help you know what to draw. For example, a good way to visually indicate that a gun is firing is by drawing the explosion that exits the end of the barrel. There are many different ways to draw this, and a lot has to do with style. I would recommend you find reference of guns shooting and see how you interpret it. A good way to get reference here is to rent an action movie and pause it at the point when the gun is being fired. Not only will this help you

see the flash, but you will also be able to see how the person shooting the gun reacts. This is another area that looking at how other artists interpret this can be helpful.

Don't forget about the bullet. Some people draw lines, indicating bullets streaking through the air. And now, thanks to The Matrix, some draw ripples in the air behind the bullet. A common method (and the one that I usually use) is to show the point of origin and point of impact. Draw the flash at the end of the barrel indicating that the gun has been fired, and then draw a reaction from the object that gets hit by the bullet. Your mind fills in the fact that the bullet traveled between those two points. Don't forget, when a bullet hits something it is going to make a mess. So draw the mess! The bigger mess you draw the more powerful it makes the gun.

Hopefully some of the things you read here will help you on your quest for artistic excellence. But keep in mind that reading will not make you a better artist. Drawing will. If you are really taking this drawing thing seriously then you should be looking at it with a long-term view. Invest the time drawing to fix your problems. Do you notice I use the word "invest," not "spend"? The word "invest" implies a future reward; there will be a payoff. You will not just be "spending" your time. Every time from this point forward in your life that you draw a gun, you will be reaping the rewards of the time you invest now. A lifetime of knowing how to convincingly draw a gun in exchange for a few evenings of not watching TV. It sounds like a good deal to me.

Stupid Gun Mistakes Every Writer Makes Even Me!

by Chuck Dixon

I made a partial list below (I'm sure Duane Thomas can add to it) of dumb things I see in novels and comics and movies in the area of firearms A few of these (for dramatic license) I make myself. But they're still dumb.

THE SILENCED REVOLVER

If you're dumb enough to put a silencer on a revolver then you'll discover that all the noise you hoped to suppress will escape from around the cylinder. See, an automatic is a sealed system allowing gas to vent only from the end of the barrel. So all your sound is coming from the barrel as well. A revolver is not sealed. There's a gap twixt the cylinder and the barrel where they meet. This gap allows the cylinder to turn. It also allows gas and noise to escape.

THE "EMPTY" AUTOMATIC

We've all seen the scene where one adversary has the drop on another at the end of a gunfight. One guy holds out an automatic to the other guy's head, says a take away line ("This is where the rubber meets the road, scumbag") and then...click. The gun's empty! Well, when an automatic has fired its last cartridge, the slide atop the action locks back. They would both know the gun was empty. At the same time the firing mechanism locks back as well, so no "click" If you need to have a scene like this make sure your character's armed with a revolver.

THE SUPER ACCURATE SNIPER SCOPE

This one's common. I do it myself, but only because most audiences don't under stand how bullets track It's the scene where we're looking through the sniper's scope and the crosshairs land on the intended quarry square on his or her head. There it is; the president, the Queen mum, the guy who made it off of Survivor island and the posts are placed right on their kissers This might work if the sniper was standing thirty yards away. But the problem is that bullets don't fire in a flat, straight line. The longer a bullet is in flight the slower it begins to travel and the more it loses altitude. This is called "the drop". A sniper must take into account the drop, the temperature, barometric pressure and wind direction and velocity when lining up a money shot. So, over a long distance you want to have your crosshairs above the target. If all is right under God's heavens then the bullet will then "drop" where you want it. I cover this one by having my shooters mention this aspect of long range sniping. And never aim for the head. You want a "center shot" or chest shot.

"THE CORDITE THICK AS FOG."

Man, did I feel dumb about five years ago when Larry Hama went on a rant about this common gaffe. Everyone at one time or another mentions the "cordite stink" of gunsmoke in their stories. But it turns out that cordite was a chemical ingredient in gunpowder for only a very short time in the late 19th Century So, unless you're writing about Highlanders fighting their way down the Khyber, this one is a major boo-boo. I don't know who immortalized this error. Probably a yellow journalist back then. It entered the lexicon of cliches next to "grieving loved ones" and "armed conflict" that are in every reporter's bag o' cliches. I cringe now when I see even writers I admire refer to cordite.

KER-CHAK!

We've all seen this one The good or bad guy had been holding a shotgun on his opposite number for a while and, just for dramatic emphasis, racks back the pump to chamber a shell Loud "Ker-Chak!" Then a take away line. "Be sure to say 'hi' to your mama when you get to Hell!" This is very cool and dramatic and I do love that sound effect But what this actually means is that the character has been threatening everyone with a gun that has no chambered round. If he pulled the trigger nothing would happen.

SHOOTING SIDEWAYS

Your gangstas just have to be different. So they aim their handguns sideways and hunch over and kind of glare along their arm in lieu of actually aiming In fact, when they do this their eyes aren't even looking at the site, but at their victim Intimidating your intended victims is all well and good. But it comes to naught if, when you finally start busting caps, you miss the other guy by six city blocks. There's a reason we hold guns vertically It's a more natural pose considering that the bar rel of a gun is going to leap up and back when each round goes off. It's a lot easier to lower that site back to it's original position than it is to go searching for them over a 180 degree radius Ever see Davey Crockett hold his flintlock sideways? This is just plain dumb.

THE STARSKY AND HUTCH WALL SLIDE

This one's common. The cops are in a bunch with handguns held in both hands, barrels pointed skyward and arms tight to their chests as they sideways-slide along a wall down a hallway toward the lair of some badguys. The problem with this is that when the shooting starts, plaster walls do not a bunker make. Also, in a real life gunbattle, bullets bounce, tumble, and tend to track along flat surfaces like walls and floors. In real life, cops blast off a few shots and hunt for substantial cover From this cover they shout out dire threats of retribution until the bad guys give up, run away, or are determined to have died in the first hail of gunfire. If you read enough police reports about firefights those hoods pumped to the double and triple digits with lead begin to make sense. The only way to even the odds in a gunfight is to take the other guy down in a hurry in the first few seconds of the fight.

"LOOKS LIKE A NINE OR A THIRTY EIGHT"

The detective shows up at the homicide scene Takes one glance at the bulletholes in the victim and pronounces the exact caliber of the murder weapon. Maybe, I say maybe. if the victim was a piece of plywood you could do this But a bullethole in a person quickly fills with fluid and the area around it swells All of this masks the true size of the bullethole. Even if you were good enough to tell the diameter of the various calibers of bullets at a glance (which would be difficult if you were looking at their exact diameters drawn on a piece of paper) that talent would be useless on a fresh corpse.

Chuck Dixon
www.dixonverse com

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COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS

Full Trim Format Art Boards

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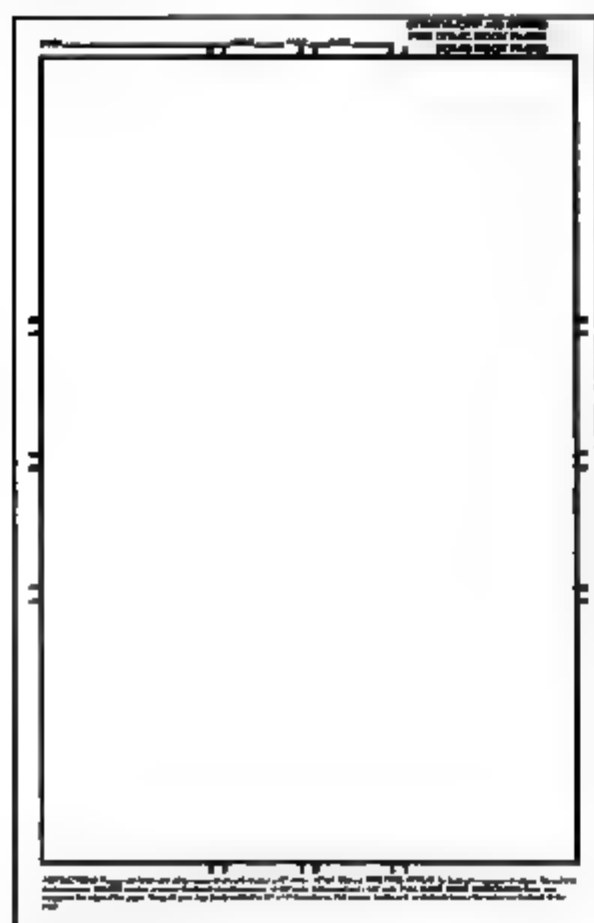
Traditional Format Art Boards
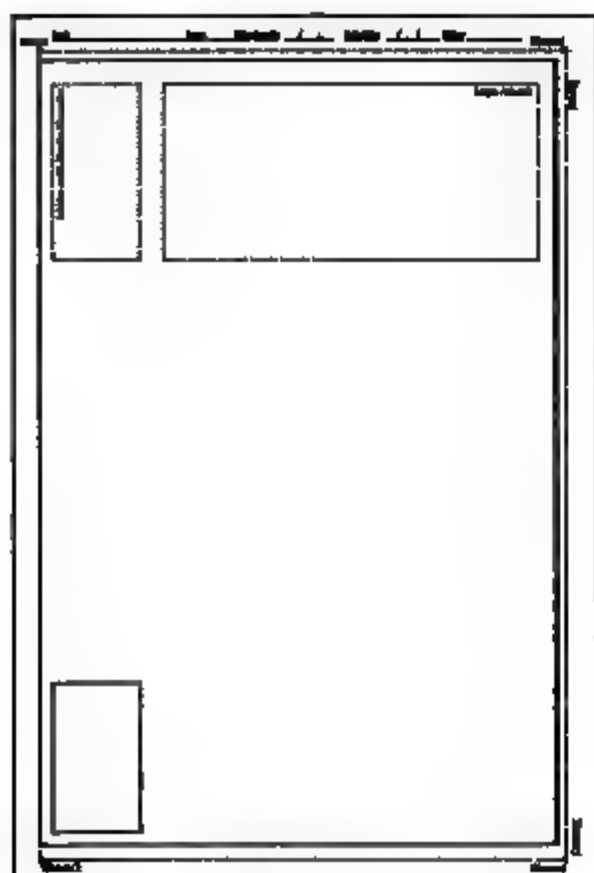
Cover Sheets

Blue Line now offers comic artist an full trim comic book board to draw your comics. Just recently comic book publishers have been using full trim comic book boards to draw their comics Blue Line has designed a full trim page that fits most requirements for full bleed comics but can also be used to draw traditional comic book page formats. Special dotted borders helps the artist to keep the important illustrations within an area to be sure it's not ost to trimming.

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(Traditional Format)

Comic Book Boards are specifically laid out with an image area for standard comic book designs These boards like the other comic book boards offer an area to write the name of the book the artist is drawing, issue number, page number and date This helps to keep track of your boards and where they belong. Double page spreads are a snap for an artist Just take two comic book boards and then butt the sides together, apply tape down the back of those boards and then the artist is ready to illustrate a double-page drawing. Fast and easy with no cutting. They are 24 pages of Brite Art Index. Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15".

Use pencil, ink (brush), marker, wash.
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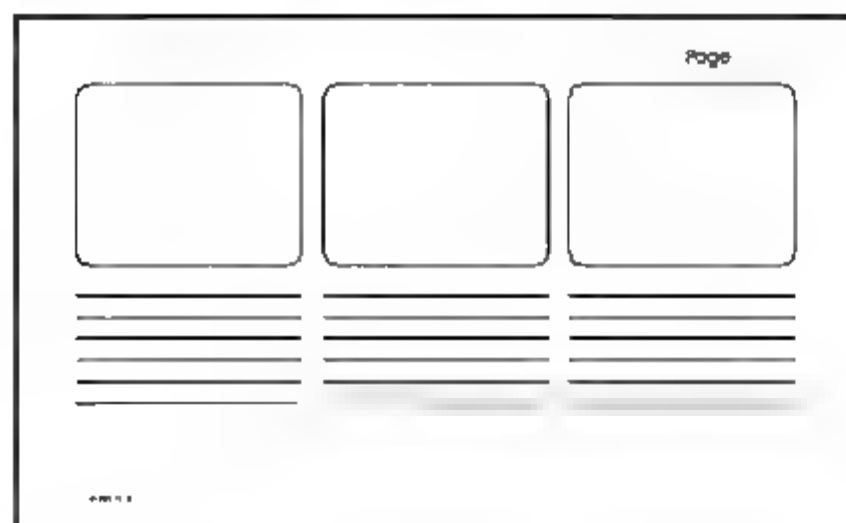
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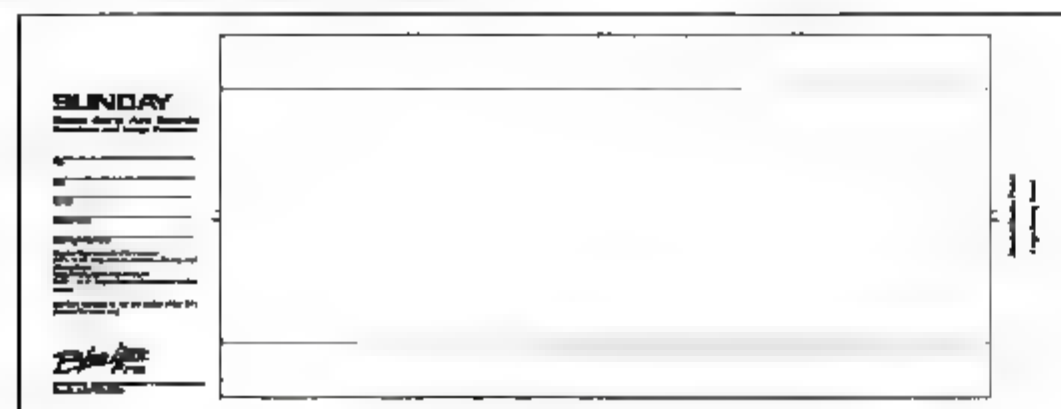
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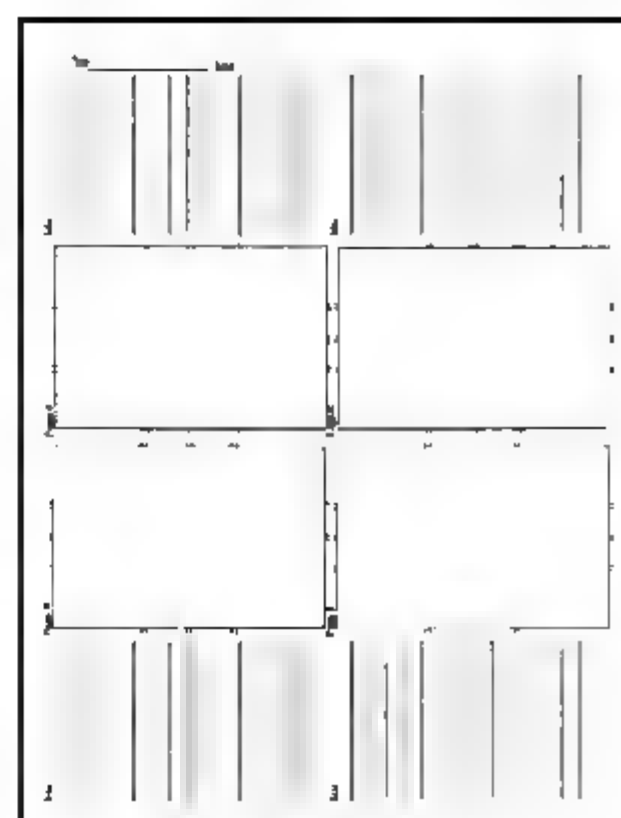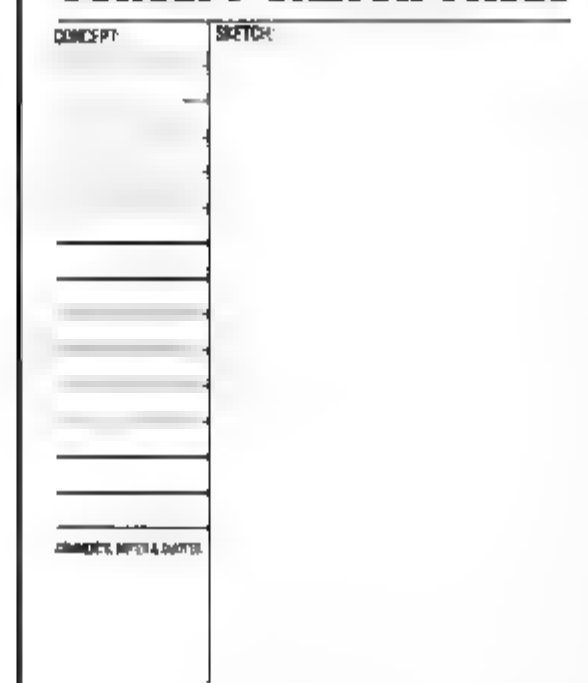
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So, for everyone who's ever dreamed of being on the other side of the table at a comic convention, doodled more in class notebooks than actually taking notes this book is for you

Forward by Beau Smith Executive Director of Publishing for McFarlane Productions

Written by Daniel Souder Edited by Bob Hickey

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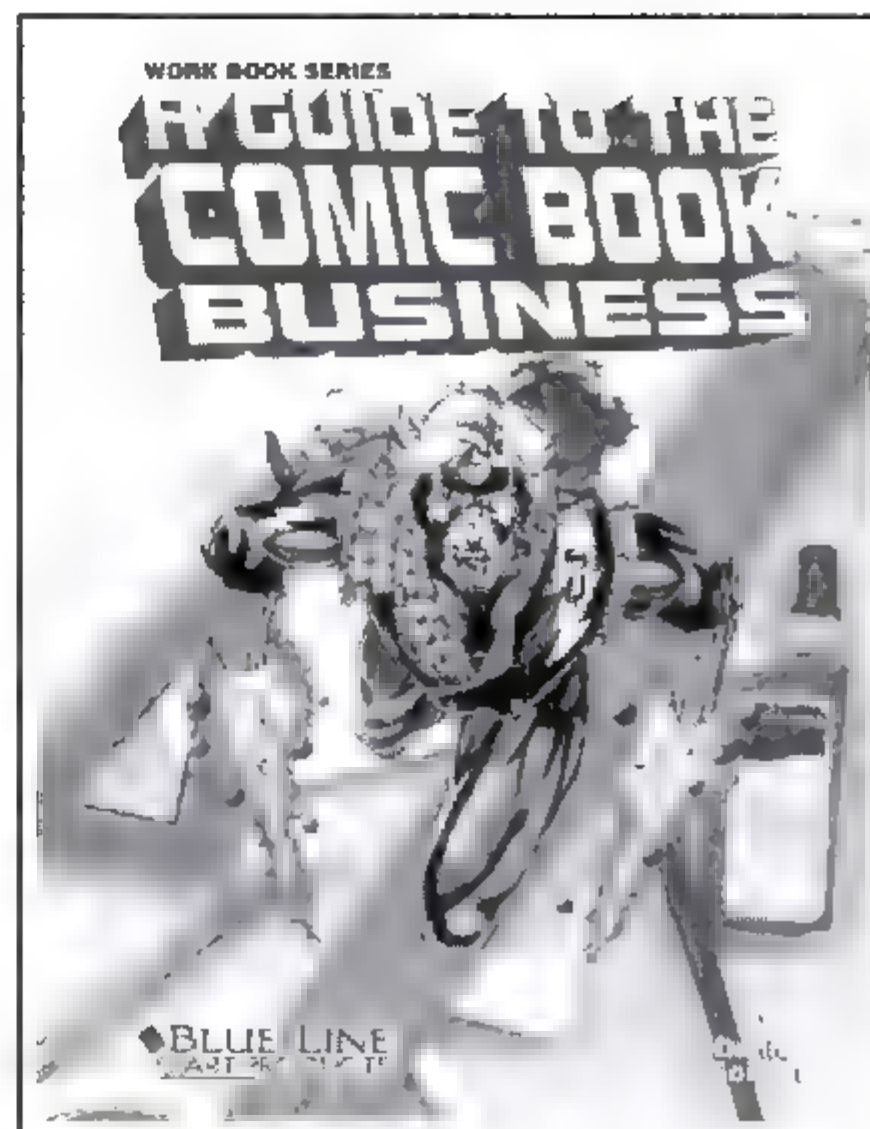
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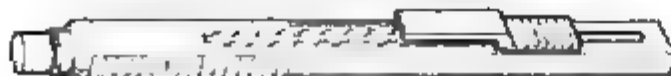
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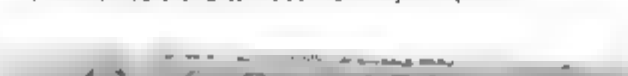
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Graphic waterproof drawing pen offering india ink density. Black permanent drawing ink.
- AR-4013-EEF 0.3mm $1.55
- AR-4017-F 0.7mm $1.55
- AR-4015-EF 0.5mm $1.55
• Penstix Set
includes all 3 Pentrix Sizes
- AR-4033 3mm, 7mm, 5mm $4.45

• Penstix Drawing/Sketching Markers
Offers maximum India drawing ink like density. Black waterproof permanent ink.
- AR-3013-EEF 0.3mm ExEx Fine $1.55
- AR-3015-EF 0.5mm Ex Fine $1.55
- AR-3017-F 0.7mm Fine $1.55
• Pentrix Drawing/Sketching Marker Set
Set of all 3 sizes
- AR-3033 Set of 3 3,.5,.7mm $4.45

SAKURA PIGMA BRUSH

Archival performance with flexible brush style nib. Very fine lines or broad strokes. Waterchem proof + fade resistant.
- AR-XSDK-BR 49 Black $3.00

ALVIN DRAWING PEN/MARKERS

• Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/ Markers
Permanent waterproof ink that dries instantly. Nibs set in stainless steel sleeves for protection.
- AR-TL01 0.1mm $1.95
- AR-TL02 0.2mm $1.95
- AR-TL03 0.3mm $1.95
- AR-TL04 0.4mm $1.95
- AR-TL05 0.5mm $1.95
Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/ Markers Sets
- AR-TLP5 set of 5 (all sizes above) $9.50
- AR-TLP3 set of 3 (.1,.3,.5mm) $5.75

KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH PENS

Rapidograph Pens are made of impact and chemical resistant components for drawing and specialty inks. Good balance and self-polishing stainless steel points.
- AR-3165-06/0 Tech Pen Size 6x0 (.13mm) $27.00
- AR-3165-04/0 Tech Pen Size 4x0 (.18mm) $27.00
- AR-3165-03/0 Tech Pen Size 3x0 (.25mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-02/0 Tech Pen Size 2x0 (.3mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-01/0 Tech Pen Size #0 (.35mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-01 Tech Pen Size #1 (.5mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-02 Tech Pen Size #2 (.6mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-03 Tech Pen Size #3 (.8mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-04 Tech Pen Size #4 (1mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-06 Tech Pen Size #6 (1.4mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-07 Tech Pen Size #7 (2mm) $22.00

MECHANICAL PENCIL

Berol Mechanical Pencil is precision made w/button lead release and light aluminum barrel.
• Mechanical Pencil 2mm.
- AR-BP10C $6.95
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. HB
- AR-BP2375-HB $10.50
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2H
- AR-BP2375-2H $10.50
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2B
- AR-SA02263-2B $10.50
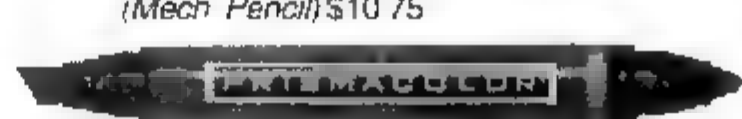**• 12-Non-Photo Blue Leads-2mm.**
- AR-BP2376-NPB $10.50
• Mechanical Pencil Sharpener
Provides professional point for standard leads.
- AR-BP14C Pencil Sharpener (Mech. Pencil) $10.75

PRISMACOLOR MARKERS

• Prismacolor Singles
Unique four in one design creates four line widths from one double-ended marker. Extra broad nibs imitates paint brush stroke while fine and thin nibs achieve gentle refined strokes.
- All Colors are available!
- All Singles $3.30
• Metallic: single nib
- AR-PM117 (Broad) Metallic Silver
- AR-PM118 (Fine) Metallic Silver
- AR-PM119 (Broad) Metallic Gold
- AR-PM120 (Fine) Metallic Gold
- All Metallic Singles $3.30
PRISMACOLOR SETS
• Primary/Secondary 12-Set
Includes AR-PM 50, 19, 15, 57, 6, 4, 32, 44, 53, 31, 61, and 9
-AR-BP12N $40.00
• Cool Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12P $40.00
• Warm Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12Q $40.00
• French Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12R $40.00
• Prismacolor 24 set
-AR-BP24S $79.25
• Prismacolor 48 set
-AR-BP48S $158.50
• Prismacolor 72 set
-AR-BP72S $238.00
• Prismacolor 120 set
-AR-BP120S $394.00
• Prismacolor 144 set
-AR-BP144S $470.00
• Empty Studio Marker Stacker
-AR-STUDIO $18.00
• Prismacolor 24 set w/hard carrying case
-AR-BP24C $90.00
• Prismacolor 48 set w/hard carrying case
-AR-BP48C $170.00

- All Colors are available!
- AR-PM1 Process Red
- AR-PM4 Crimson Red
- AR-PM5 Scarlet Lake
- AR-PM6 Carmine Red
- AR-PM7 Magenta
- AR-PM8 Pink
- AR-PM10 Blush Pink
- AR-PM11 Deco Pink
- AR-PM12 Light Pink
- AR-PM13 Poppy Red
- AR-PM14 Pale Vermilion
- AR-PM15 Yellowed Orange
- AR-PM16 Orange
- AR-PM17 Sunburst Yellow
- AR-PM18 Yellow Ochre
- AR-PM19 Canary Yellow
- AR-PM21 Tulip Yellow
- AR-PM23 Cream
- AR-PM24 Yellow Chartreuse
- AR-PM25 Spring Green
- AR-PM26 Lt Olive Green
- AR-PM27 Chartreuse
- AR-PM28 Olive Green
- AR-PM31 Dark Green
- AR-PM32 Parrot Green
- AR-PM33 Hunter Green
- AR-PM36 Lime Green
- AR-PM37 Aquemarine
- AR-PM38 Teal Blue
- AR-PM39 True Blue
- AR-PM40 Copenhagan Blue
- AR-PM42 Violet Blue
- AR-PM43 Indigo Blue
- AR-PM44 Ultramarine
- AR-PM45 Navy Blue
- AR-PM46 Light Aqua
- AR-PM47 Non-photo Blue
- AR-PM48 Lt Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM50 Violet
- AR-PM51 Black Grape
- AR-PM53 Mulberry
- AR-PM55 Rhodamine
- AR-PM59 Lavender
- AR-PM60 Violet Mist
- AR-PM61 Dark Umber
- AR-PM62 Sepia
- AR-PM65 Sienna Brown
- AR-PM69 Goldenrod
- AR-PM70 Sand
- AR-PM71 Buff
- AR-PM72 Eggshel
- AR-PM73 Flagstone Red
- AR-PM78 Brick Beige
- AR-PM79 Brick White
- AR-PM80 Putty
- AR-PM82 Terra Cotta
- AR-PM86 Cherry
- AR-PM88 Dark Brown
- AR-PM89 Light Walnut
- AR-PM90 Walnut
- AR-PM93 Burnt Ochre
- AR-PM95 Light Tan
- AR-PM96 Blond Wood
- AR-PM97 Warm Black
- AR-PM98 Black

You must purchase a minimum of 12 single marker each time you order.

- **AR-PM99** Warm Grey 10%
- **AR-PM100** Warm Grey 20%
- **AR-PM101** Warm Grey 30%
- **AR-PM102** Warm Grey 40%
- **AR-PM103** Warm Grey 50%
- **AR-PM104** Warm Grey 60%
- **AR-PM105** Warm Grey 70%
- **AR-PM106** Warm Grey 80%
- **AR-PM107** Warm Grey 90%
- **AR-PM108** Cool Grey 10%
- **AR-PM109** Cool Grey 20%
- **AR-PM110** Cool Grey 30%
- **AR-PM111** Cool Grey 40%
- **AR-PM112** Cool Grey 50%
- **AR-PM113** Cool Grey 60%
- **AR-PM114** Cool Grey 70%
- **AR-PM115** Cool Grey 80%
- **AR-PM116** Cool Grey 90%
- **AR-PM122** Salmon Pink
- **AR-PM123** Spanish Orange
- **AR-PM124** Limepool
- **AR-PM125** Peacock Blue
- **AR-PM126** Cerulean Blue
- **AR-PM127** Imperial Violet
- **AR-PM128** Parma Violet
- **AR-PM129** Dahlia Purple
- **AR-PM130** Deco Orange
- **AR-PM131** Deco Yellow
- **AR-PM132** Jasmine
- **AR-PM133** Deco Pink
- **AR-PM134** Deco Blue
- **AR-PM135** Deco Green
- **AR-PM136** Deco Aqua
- **AR-PM137** Clay Rose
- **AR-PM138** Pink Rose
- **AR-PM140** Celadon Green
- **AR-PM141** Jade Green
- **AR-PM142** Brittany Blue
- **AR-PM143** Mediterranean Blue
- **AR-PM144** Cloud Blue
- **AR-PM145** Blue Slate
- **AR-PM146** Periwinkle
- **AR-PM147** Greyed Lavender
- **AR-PM148** Cornflower
- **AR-PM149** Bronze
- **AR-PM150** Mahogany Red
- **AR-PM151** Raspberry
- **AR-PM152** Henna
- **AR-PM153** Pumpkin Orange
- **AR-PM154** Mineral Orange
- **AR-PM155** French Grey 10%
- **AR-PM156** French Grey 20%
- **AR-PM157** French Grey 30%
- **AR-PM158** French Grey 40%
- **AR-PM159** French Grey 50%
- **AR-PM160** French Grey 60%
- **AR-PM161** French Grey 70%
- **AR-PM162** French Grey 80%
- **AR-PM163** French Grey 90%
- **AR-PM164** Peacock Green
- **AR-PM165** Grass Green
- **AR-PM166** True Green
- **AR-PM167** Apple Green
- **AR-PM168** Dark Purple
- **AR-PM169** Tuscan Red
- **AR-PM170** Peach
- **AR-PM171** Lilac
- **AR-PM172** Light Umber
- **AR-PM173** Light Violet
- **AR-PM184** Forest Green
- **AR-PM185** Spruce
- **AR-PM186** Emerald
- **AR-PM187** Leaf Green
- **AR-PM190** Tangerine
- *All Single Markers $3.30*

> You must purchase a minimum of 12 single marker each time you order.

RULERS
• **Stainless Steel Rulers** *offering flexible steel with non-skid cork backing.*
- *AR-200-12* Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing $5.95
- *AR-200-18* Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing $6.95
• **Plastic Ruler** *1 inch with 1/16" markings and metric markings.*
- *AR-C36* Ruler 12" (plastic ruler) $1 25
- *AR-18* Ruler 6" (plastic ruler) $ 50

SHARPIE MARKERS
Permanent markers with high intensity ink Quick drying
- *AR-SA37101* Ultra Fine Black $1 30
- *AR-SA35101* Extra Fine Black $1 30
- *AR-SA30101* Regular Black $1 30
- *AR-SA33101* Super Sharpie $1 95

METALLIC PENS
Offers high quality metallic ink Great for autographs.
- *AR-SA46115* Gold Pen $4 50
- *AR-SA46120* Silver Pen $4 50

CHINA MARKING PENCILS
Offers moisture resistant, non toxic odor-free pigments Self Sharpening Offered as a dozen or singles.

AR-173T Dozen Black	$10.75
AR-173T-1 Single Black	$.95
AR-164T Dozen White	$10.75
AR-164T-1 Single White	$.95

T-SQUARES
• **Plastic T-squares** *offering flexible plastic with both metric and standard measurements*
- *AR-HX02* Plastic 12" $3 95
- *AR-NBA18* Plastic 18" $7.95
- *AR-NBA24* Plastic 24" $10 95
• **Aluminum T-squares** *offering hard tempered aluminum blade riveted to a rugged plastic head*
- *AR-FR63-112* Aluminum 12" $10 95
- *AR-FR63-118* Aluminum 18" $12 95
- *AR-FR63-124* Aluminum 24" $13 95

TRIANGLES
High quality triangles made of .080" acrylic. Raised inking edges. Great for Inkers.
• **30" x 60" W/ Inking Edge**
- *AR-1204-60* Triangle 30"x60" 4 inch $3 50
- *AR-1206-60* Triangle 30"x60" 6 inch $4 50
- *AR-1208-60* Triangle 30"x60" 8 inch $5 50
- *AR-1210-60* Triangle 30"x60" 10 inch $6.50
- *AR-1212-60* Triangle 30" 60" 12 inch $8.50
• **45" X 90" W/ Inking Edge**
- *AR-1204-45* Triangle 45"x90" 4 inch $4.50
- *AR-1206-45* Triangle 45"x90" 6 inch $5.50
- *AR-1208-45* Triangle 45"x90" 8 inch $7 50
- *AR-1210-45* Triangle 45"x90" 10 inch $9.50
- *AR-1212-45* Triangle 45"x90" 12 inch $13.50

COMPASS SET
Geometry set includes ruler, compass, two triangles, protractor, eraser and sharpener.
• **8-piece Geometry Set**
- *AR-HX18807* $4 95
• **8-Piece Geometry Set** *(brass compass)*
- *AR-723405* $7 95

• **Basic Geometry Set**
4-piece Geometry Set (Ruler, 12 protractor, 30/60 + 45/90 triangles)
- *AR-FL03* $5 95
• **Basic Combination Compass**
6-piece compass set. side-screw bow compass, knee joint compass, extension bar, spare leads, 2" divider point and a lead pointer.
- *AR-S61* Set $15.95
• **Compass Set**
6-piece drawing set contains: Small side screw compass 5 ½" self-centering knee joint compass/divider, extension bar, technical pen adapter, divider point and lead pointer.

-*ARHLX01330-01330*   Set $16 95
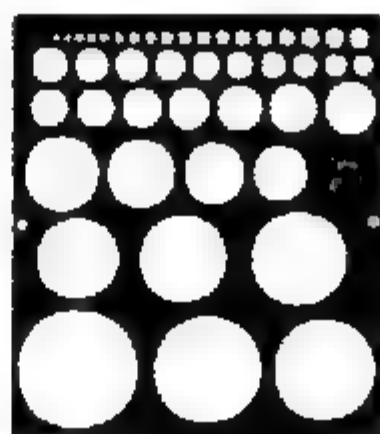
CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES
• *Circle Templates*
Metric and standard Risers for smear-free drawing (Great for Inkers)
• **Large Circles**
- *AR-13001* $7 95
• *Extra Large Circles*
- *AR-13011* $6.95
• *French Curves (Inking Edge)*
- *AR-9000* Set $6 95
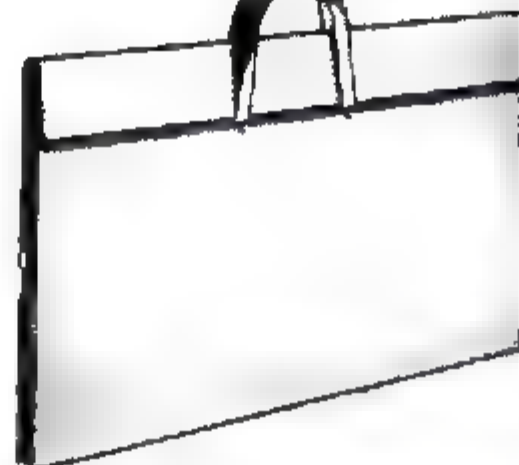• *Ellipse Temps.*
- *AR-PK12691* $12.00

DISPLAY PORTFOLIOS
• **ARTFOLIOS**
24 pages of acid, pvc, and legnen safe art sleeves Archival Safe
- *AR-IA1212* Artfolio Book 11 x 17 w/ 24 sheets $15.95
(Holds Blue Line Comic Book Art Boards)
- *AR-IA 1214* Artfolio book 14 x 17 w/ 24 sheets $25.95
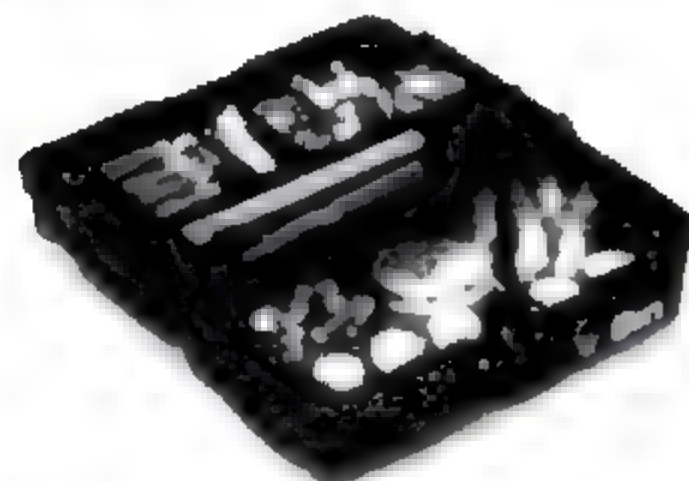(Holds most oversized art boards)
• **POCKET PORTFOLIO**
- *AR-FL419WH* Pocket Portfolio 14 x 20

STORAGE BOXES
• **Sketch Pac** 2-sided safe storing box 12 3/8" x 4 ¼" x 1 ¾"
- *AR-6880AB* $12 95

• **One Tray Art Bins** 13" x 7 ¼" x 5 ¾", Elevated tray for viewing of supplies in bottom bin. Tight Latch
- *AR-6843AC* black $15 25

• **DRAFTSMAN BRUSH**
Removes shavings from paper. Cleaning without fear of smudging.
• **Draftsman Brush (cleaning paper)**
- *AR-FT5391* $6.00

XACTO KNIFE
Rubberized barrel Rear release mechanism with safety cap.
• **Xacto Knife**
- *AR-XA3626* $5 25
Xacto Refill Blades #1
- *AR-OLKB* $6 50

WORKABLE FIXATIF (Krylon)
Provides lasting protection. Prevents smudging, dusting and wrinkling
• **Workable Fixatif**
- *AR-KR1306* $8 95

RUBBER CEMENT
Contact adhesive for paste-up and other graphic art uses.
• **Rubber Cement 4oz.**
- *AR-BT138* $3 50
• **Rubber Cement Quart**
- *AR-BT102* $13 25
• **Rubber Cement Thinner Pint**
- *AR-BT201* $8 50
• **Rubber Cement Pick-Up (eraser)**
- *AR-BT700* $1 50

COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART SLEEVES
Protect your original Art Work
• **Comic Book Original Art Sleeves**
11 ½" x 19" Polyethylene (3 0 mil)
- *AR-BAG 1119-25* 25 Bags $7 50
  AR BAG 1119-100 100 Bag $25.00
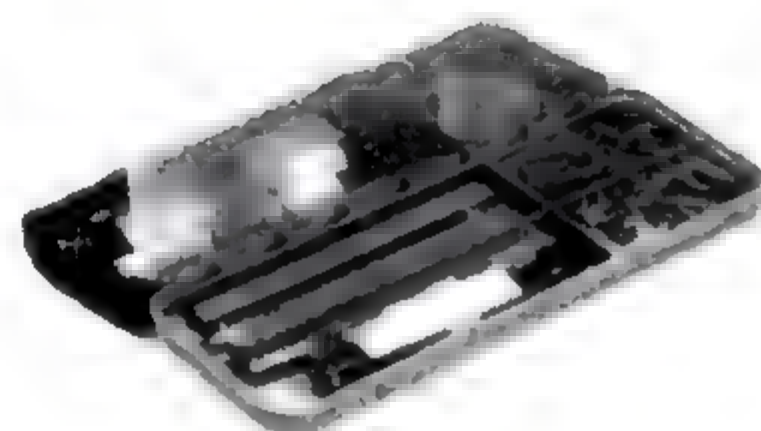
COPIC Markers have been widely used in Europe and Asia where their coloring qualities go hand in hand with the style we know as manga. Their versatility and variety lends itself to the imagination of the creator and gives him or her options for their creative style. The standard square designed COPIC marker is double-ended and fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

• Single Copic Markers
$4.95 each

Code	Color
100B45	Smokey Blue
100BG02	New Blue
100BG05	Holiday Blue
100BG09	Blue Green
100BG10	Cool Shadow
100BG11	Moon White
100BG13	Mint Green
100BG15	Aqua
100BG18	Teal Blue
100BG32	Aqua Mint
100BG34	Horizon Green
100BG45	Nile Blue
100BG49	Duck Blue
100BG99	Fragstone Blue
100BV00	Mauve Shadow
100BV04	Blue Berry
100BV08	Blue Violet
100BV23	Grayish Lavender
100BV31	Pale Lavender
100C0	Cool Gray 0
100C1	Cool Gray 1
100C10	Cool Gray 10
100C2	Cool Gray 2
100C3	Cool Gray 3
100C4	Cool Gray 4
100C5	Cool Gray 5
100C6	Cool Gray 6
100C7	Cool Gray 7
100C8	Cool Gray 8
100C9	Cool Gray 9
100E00	Skin White
100E02	Fruit Pink
100E04	Lipstick Natural
100E07	Light Mahogany
100E09	Burnt Sienna
100E11	Bareley Beige
100E13	Light Suntan
100E15	Dark Suntan
100E19	Redwood
100E21	Baby Skin Pink
100E25	Caribe Cocoa
100E27	Africano
100E29	Burnt Umber
100E31	Brick Beige
100E33	Sand
100E34	Orientale
100E35	Chamois
100E37	Sepia
100E39	Leather
100E40	Brick White
100E41	Pear White
100E43	Dull Ivory
100E44	Clay
100E49	Dark Bark
100E51	Milky White
100E53	Raw Silk
100E55	Light Camel
100E57	Light Walnut
100E59	Walnut
100E77	Maroon
100G00	Jade Green
100G02	Spectrum Green
100G05	Emerald Green
100G07	Nile Green
100G09	Veronese Green
100G12	Sea Green
100G14	Apple Green
100G16	Malachite
100G17	Forest Green
100G19	Bright Parrot Green
100G20	Wax White
100G21	Lime Green
100G24	Willow
100G28	Ocean Green
100G29	Pine Tree Green
100G40	Dim Green
100G82	Spring Dim Green
100G85	Verdigris
100G99	Olive
100N0	Neutral Gray 0
100N1	Neutral Gray 1
100N10	Neutral Gray 10
100N2	Neutral Gray 2
100N3	Neutral Gray 3
100N4	Neutral Gray 4
100N5	Neutral Gray 5
100N6	Neutral Gray 6
100N7	Neutral Gray 7
100N8	Neutral Gray 8
100N9	Neutral Gray 9
100R00	Pinkish White
100R02	Flesh
100R05	Salmon Red
100R08	Vermilion
100R11	Pale Cherry Pink
100R17	Lipstick Orange
100R20	Blush
100R24	Prawn
100R27	Cadmium Red
100R29	Lipstick Red
100R32	Peach
100R35	Cora
100R37	Carmine
100R39	Garnet
100R59	Cardinal
100RV02	Sugared Almnd Pink
100RV04	Shock Pink
100RV06	Cerise
100RV09	Fuchsia
100RV10	Pale Pink
100RV11	Pink
100RV13	Tender Pink
100RV14	Begonia Pink
100RV17	Deep Magenta
100RV19	Red Violet
100RV21	Light Pink
100RV25	Dog Rose Flower
100RV29	Crimson
100RV32	Shadow Pink
100RV34	Dark Pink
100T0	Toner Gray 0
100T1	Toner Gray 1
100T10	Toner Gray 10
100T2	Toner Gray 2
100T3	Toner Gray 3
100T4	Toner Gray 4
100T5	Toner Gray 5
100T6	Toner Gray 6
100T7	Toner Gray 7
100T8	Toner Gray 8
100T9	Toner Gray 9
100V04	Lilac
100V06	Lavender
100V09	Violet
100V12	Pale Lilac
100V15	Mallow
100V17	Amethyst
100W0	Warm Gray 0
100W1	Warm Gray 1
100W10	Warm Gray 10
100W2	Warm Gray 2
100W3	Warm Gray 3
100W4	Warm Gray 4
100W5	Warm Gray 5
100W6	Warm Gray 6
100W7	Warm Gray 7
100W8	Warm Gray 8
100W9	Warm Gray 9
100Y00	Barium Yellow
100Y02	Canary Yellow
100Y06	Yellow
100Y08	Acid Yellow
100Y11	Pale Yellow
100Y13	Lemon Yellow
100Y15	Cadmium Yellow
100Y17	Golden Yellow
100Y19	Napoli Yellow
100Y21	Buttercup Yellow
100Y23	Yellowish Beige
100Y26	Mustard
100Y38	Honey
100YG01	Green Bice
100YG03	Yellow Green
100YG05	Salad
100YG09	Acid Green
100YG09	Lettuce Green
100YG11	Mignonette
100YG13	Chartreuse
100YG17	Grass Green
100YG21	Anise
100YG23	New Leaf
100YG25	Celadon Green
100YG41	Pale Green
100YG45	Cobalt Green
100YG63	Pea Green
100YG67	Moss
100YG91	Putty
100YG95	Pale Olive
100YG97	Spanish Olive
100YG99	Marine Green
100YR00	Powder Pink
100YR02	Light Orange
100YR04	Chrome Orange
100YR07	Cadmium Orange
100YR09	Chinese Orange
100YR14	Caramel
100YR16	Apricot
100YR18	Sanguine
100YR21	Creme
100YR23	Yellow Ochre
100YR24	Pale Sepia

• COPIC MARKER SETS

Set	Price
110 COPIC 12 Basic	$59.40
112 COPIC 12 PCS NG	$59.40
114 COPIC 12 PCS TG	$59.40
116 COPIC 12 PCS WG	$59.40
118 COPIC 12 PCS CG	$59.40
120 COPIC 36 Color Set	$178.20
140 Copic 72 Color Set A	$356.40
150 Copic 72 Color Set B	$356.40
155 Copic 72 Color Set C	$356.40
160 Copic Empty Marker	$3.60

• COPIC Various Ink (Refills) $4.95

Code	Color
200100	Black
200110	Special Black
200B00	Frost Blue
200B000	Pale Porcelain Blue
200B01	Mint Blue
200B02	Robin's Egg Blue
200B04	Tahitian Blue
200B05	Process Blue
200B06	Peacock Blue
200B12	Ice Blue
200B14	Light Blue
200B16	Cyanine Blue
200B18	Lapis Lazuli
200B21	Baby Blue
200B23	Phthalo Blue
200B24	Sky
200B26	Cobalt Blue
200B28	Royal Blue
200B29	Ultramarine
200B32	Pale Blue
200B34	Manganese Blue
200B37	Antwerp Blue
200B39	Prussian Blue
200B41	Powder Blue
200B45	Smoky Blue
200B52	Soft Greenish Blue
200B60	Pale Blue Grey
200B63	Light Hydrangea
200B79	Iris
200B91	Pale Grayish Blue
200B93	Light Crockery Blue
200B95	Light Grayish Cobalt
200B97	Night Blue
200B99	Agate
200BG01	Aqua Blue
200BG02	New Blue
200BG05	Holiday Blue
200BG07	Petroleum Blue
200BG09	Blue Green
200BG10	Cool Shadow
200BG11	Moon White
200BG13	Mint Green
200BG15	Aqua
200BG18	Teal Blue
200BG23	Coral Sea
200BG32	Aqua Mint
200BG34	Horizon Green
200BG45	Nile Blue
200BG49	Duck Blue
200BG93	Green Gray
200BG96	Bush
200BG99	Fragstone Blue
200BV00	Mauve Shadow
200BV000	Iridescent Mauve
200BV02	Prune
200BV04	Blue Berry
200BV08	Blue Violet
200BV11	Soft Violet
200BV13	Hydrangea Blue
200BV17	Deep Reddish Blue
200BV20	Dull Lavender
200BV23	Grayish Lavender
200BV25	Grayish Violet
200BV29	Slate
200BV31	Pale Lavender
200C0	Cool Gray
200C1	Cool Gray 1
200C10	Cool Gray 10
200C2	Cool Gray 2
200C3	Cool Gray 3
200C4	Cool Gray 4
200C5	Cool Gray 5
200C6	Cool Gray 6
200C7	Cool Gray 7
200C8	Cool Gray 8
200C9	Cool Gray 9
200E00	Skin White
200E000	Pale Fruit Pink
200E01	Pink Flamingo
200E02	Fruit Pink
200E04	Lipstick Natural
200E07	Light Mahogany
200E08	Brown
200E09	Burnt Sienna
200E11	Bareley Beige
200E13	Light Suntan
200E15	Dark Suntan
200E19	Redwood
200E21	Baby Skin Pink
200E25	Caribe Cocoa
200E27	Africano
200E29	Burnt Umber
200E31	Brick Beige
200E33	Sand
200E34	Orientale
200E35	Chamois
200E37	Sepia
200E39	Leather
200E40	Brick White
200E41	Pear White
200E43	Dull Ivory
200E44	Clay
200E47	Dark Brown
200E49	Dark Bark
200E50	Egg Shell
200E51	Milky White
200E53	Raw Silk
200E55	Light Camel
200E57	Light Walnut
200E59	Walnut
200E71	Champagne
200E74	Cocoa Brown
200E77	Maroon
200E79	Cashew
200E93	Tea Rose
200E95	Flesh Pink
200E97	Deep Orange
200E99	Baked Clay
200FB2	Flurescent Dull Blue
200FBG2	Fluorescent Dull Blue Green
200FRV1	Fluorescent Pink
200FV2	Fluorescent Dull Violet
200FY1	Fluorescent Yellow Orange
200FYG1	Fluorescent Yellow
200FYG2	Fluorescent Dull Yellow Green
200FYR1	Fluorescent Orange
200G00	Jade Green
200G02	Spectrum Green
200G05	Emerald Green
200G07	Nile Green
200G09	Veronese Green
200G12	Sea Green
200G14	Apple Green
200G16	Malachite
200G17	Forest Green
200G19	Bright Parrot Green
200G20	Wax White
200G21	Lime Green
200G24	Willow
200G28	Ocean Green
200G29	Pine Tree Green
200G40	Dim Green
200G82	Spring Dim Green
200G85	Verdigris
200G94	Grayish Olive
200G99	Olive
200N0	Neutral Gray
200N1	Neutral Gray 1
200N10	Neutral Gray 10
200N2	Neutral Gray 2
200N3	Neutral Gray 3
200N4	Neutral Gray 4
200N5	Neutral Gray 5
200N6	Neutral Gray 6
200N7	Neutral Gray 7
200N8	Neutral Gray 8
200N9	Neutral Gray 9
200R00	Pinkish White
200R000	Cherry White
200R02	Flesh
200R05	Salmon Red
200R08	Vermillion
200R11	Pale Cherry White
200R12	Light Rose Tea
200R14	Light Rouse
200R17	Lipstick Orange
200R20	Blush
200R22	Light Prawn
200R24	Prawn
200R27	Cadmium Red
200R29	Lipstick Red
200R30	Pale Yellowish Pink
200R32	Peach
200R35	Coral
200R37	Carmine
200R39	Garnet
200R43	Bougainvillaea
200R46	Strong Red
200R59	Cardinal
200RV02	Sugared Almond Pink
200RV04	Shock Pink
200RV06	Cerise
200RV09	Fuchsia
200RV10	Pale Pink
200RV11	Pink
200RV13	Tender Pink
200RV14	Begonia Pink
200RV17	Deep Magenta
200RV19	Red Violet
200RV21	Light Pink
200RV23	Pure Pink
200RV25	Dog Rose Flower
200RV29	Crimson
200RV32	Shadow Pink
200RV34	Dark Pink
200RV42	Salmon Pink
200T0	Toner Gray
200T1	Toner Gray 1
200T10	Toner Gray 10
200T2	Toner Gray 2
200T3	Toner Gray 3
200T4	Toner Gray 4
200T5	Toner Gray 5
200T6	Toner Gray 6
200T7	Toner Gray 7
200T8	Toner Gray 8
200T9	Toner Gray 9
200V01	Health
200V04	Lilac
200V05	Marigold
200V06	Lavendar
200V09	Violet
200V12	Pale Lilac
200V15	Mallow
200V17	Amethyst
200V91	Pale Grape
200V95	Light Grape
200V99	Aubergine
200W0	Warm Gray
200W1	Warm Gray 1
200W10	Warm Gray 10
200W2	Warm Gray 2
200W3	Warm Gray 3
200W4	Warm Gray 4
200W5	Warm Gray 5
200W6	Warm Gray 6
200W7	Warm Gray 7
200W8	Warm Gray 8
200W9	Warm Gray 9
200Y00	Barium Yellow
200Y02	Canary Yellow
200Y04	Acacia
200Y06	Yellow
200Y08	Acid Yellow
200Y11	Pale Yellow
200Y13	Lemon Yellow
200Y15	Cadmium Yellow
200Y17	Golden Yellow
200Y19	Napoli Yellow
200Y21	Buttercup Yellow
200Y23	Yellowish Beige
200Y26	Mustard
200Y28	Lionet Gold
200Y32	Cashmere
200Y35	Maize
200Y38	Honey
200YG00	Mimosa Yellow
200YG01	Green Bice
200YG03	Yellow Green
200YG05	Salad
200YG06	Yellowish Green
200YG07	Acid Green
200YG09	Lettuce Green
200YG11	Mignonette
200YG13	Chartreuse
200YG17	Grass Green
200YG21	Anise
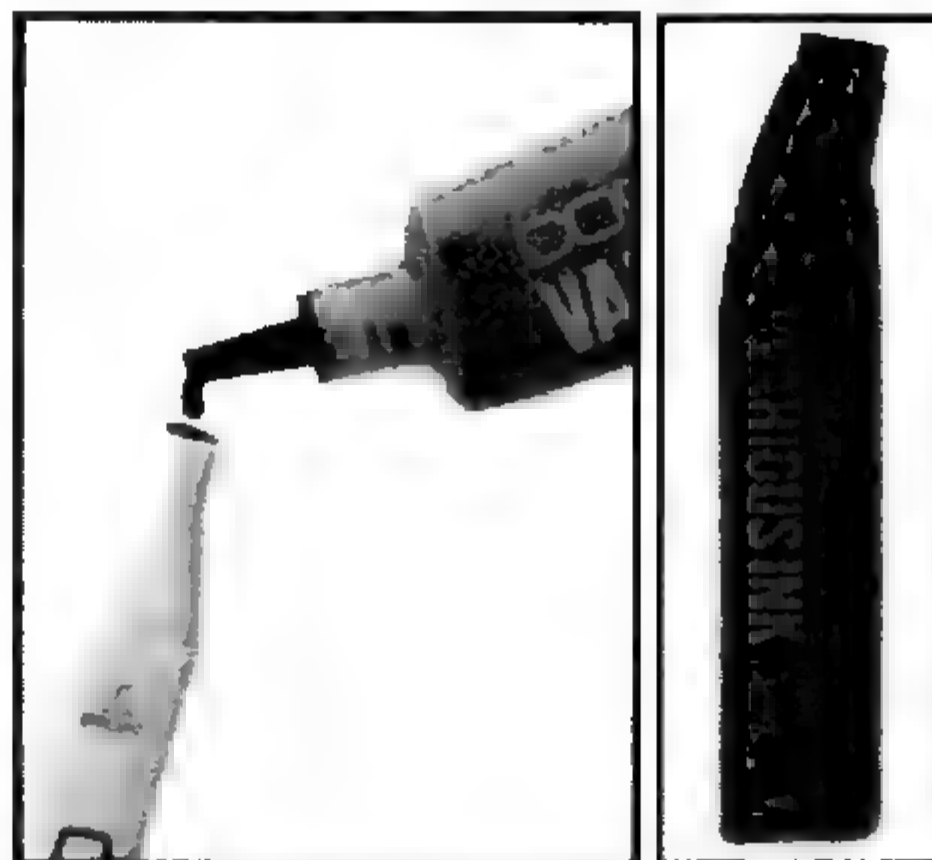
200 SERIES One of the best parts about COPIC markers standard and sketch is their refillable ink feature. No more tossing out dried out markers. Just fill it back up again and you're ready to go. Refills can be used up six times. This refillable feature gives you the opportunity to make your own color though mixing inks, creating an original color all your own.

You must purchase a minimum of 12 single marker each time you order.	

200YG23	New Leaf
200YG25	Celadon Green
200YG41	Pale Green
200YG45	Cobalt Green
200YG63	Pea Green
200YG67	Moss
200YG91	Putty
200YG93	Grayish Yellow
200YG95	Pale Olive
200YG97	Spanish Olive
200YG99	Marine Green
200YR00	Powder Pink
200YR000	Silk
200YR02	Light Orange
200YR04	Chrome Orange
200YR07	Cadmium Orange
200YR09	Chinese Orange
200YR14	Carame
200YR16	Apricot
200YR18	Sanguine
200YR20	Yellowish Shade
200YR21	Cream
200YR23	Yellow Ochre
200YR24	Pale Sepia
200YR31	Light Reddish Yellow
200YR61	Yellowish Skin Pink
200YR65	Atoll
200YR68	Orange

Colorless Blender

210	Various Ink Colorless Blender	$3.75
220	Various Colorless Blender 200c	$9.75
230	Various Ink Empty Bottle	$2.65

Nibs

• **Replacable Marker Nibs $4 20**
Another great feature about COPIC makers is there interchangeable nibs. From broad to calligraphy - provide greater freedom in technique in your renderings. COPIC Nibs deliver clear vibrant color on photocopied surfaces as well as glass plastics and metals. The nibs are made of strong but flexible polyester for smooth consistent application. Nibs come in a pack of 10 except for the brush variety that comes in a pack of 3.

300	Standard Broad
310	Soft Broad
320	Round
330	Calligraphy 5mm
340	Brush
350	Standard Fine
360	Super Fine
370	Semi Broad
380	Calligraphy 3mm
385	Sketch Nib Super Brush
390	Sketch Nib Medium Broad

400	Copic Tweezer	$4.20

Our special COPIC Tweezers give you an easy no-mess nib change that gets you drawing again in minutes. Being able to change nibs quickly helps you keep up with the most demanding marker techniques.

• **COPIC SKETCH MARKERS**
The oval designed Sketch COPIC marker is double-ended and is fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. COPIC Sketch markers oval body profile gives you a feel of a fast flowing experience in your

hands. It paints as well as it draws. They come with a broad nib and a brush like nib, available in medium + broad and super brush making them great for delicate or bold expression (from fashion and graphics to textiles and fine arts lettering/calligraphy). COPIC sketch markers are available in 286 colors. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their reliable ink and replaceable nib features.

450	Colorless Blender	$4.20
45100	Black	$4.20
45110	Special Black	$4.20
452	Sketch 12 Basic Set	$59.40
454	Sketch 36 Basic Set	$178.20
456	Sketch 72 set A	$356.40
458	Sketch 72 Set B	$356.40

• **Single COPIC SKETCH Markers $4.95**

45B00	Frost Blue
45B000	Pale Porcelain Blue
45B01	Mint Blue
45B02	Robins Egg Blue
45B04	Tahitian Blue
45B05	Process Blue
45B06	Peacock Blue
45B12	Ice Blue
45B14	Light Blue
45B16	Cyanine $4.95
45B18	Lapis Lazuli
45B21	Baby Blue
45B23	Phthalo Blue
45B24	Sky
45B26	Cobalt Blue
45B28	Royal Blue
45B29	Ultra Marine
45B32	Pale Blue
45B34	Manganese Blue
45B37	Antwerp Blue
45B39	Prussian Blue
45B41	Powder Blue
45B45	Smokey Blue
45B52	Soft Greenish Blue
45B60	Pale Blue Gray
45B63	Light Hydrangea
45B79	Iris
45B91	Pale Grayish Blue
45B93	Light Crockery Blue
45B95	Light Grayish Cobalt
45B97	Night Blue
45B99	Agate
45BG01	Aqua Blue
45BG02	New Blue
45BG05	Holiday Blue
45BG07	Petroleum Blue
45BG09	Blue Green
45BG10	Cool Shadow
45BG11	Moon White
45BG13	Mint Green
45BG15	Aqua
45BG18	Teal Blue
45BG23	Coral Sea
45BG32	Aqua Mint
45BG34	Horizon Green
45BG45	Nile Blue
45BG49	Duck Blue
45BG93	Green
45BG96	Bush
45BG99	Fragstone Blue
45BV00	Mauve Shadow
45BV000	Iridescent Mauve
45BV02	Prune
45BV04	Blue Berry
45BV08	Blue Violet
45BV11	Soft Violet
45BV13	Hydrangea Blue
45BV17	Deep Reddish Blue
45BV20	Dull Lavender
45BV23	Grayish Lavender
45BV25	Grayish Violet
45BV29	Slate
45BV31	Pale Lavender
45C0	Cool Gray 0
45C1	Cool Gray 1
45C10	Cool Gray 10
45C2	Cool Gray 2
45C3	Cool Gray 3
45C4	Cool Gray 4
45C5	Cool Gray 5
45C6	Cool Gray 6
45C7	Cool Gray 7
45C8	Cool Gray 8
45C9	Cool Gray 9
45E00	Skin White
45E000	Pale Fruit Pink
45E01	Pink Flamingo
45E02	Fruit Pink
45E04	Lipstick Natural
45E07	Light Mahogany
45E08	Brown
45E09	Burnt Sienna
45E11	Barsley Beige
45E13	Light Suntan
45E15	Dark Suntan
45E19	Redwood
45E21	Baby Skin Pink
45E25	Caribe Cocoa

45E27	Africano
45E29	Burnt Umber
45E31	Brick Beige
45E33	Sard
45E34	Oriental
45E35	Chamois
45E37	Sepia
45E39	Leather
45E40	Brick White
45E41	Pearl White
45E43	Dull Ivory
45E44	Clay
45E47	Dark Brown
45E49	Dark Bark
45E50	Eggshell
45E51	Milky White
45E53	Raw Silk
45E55	Light Came
45E57	Light Walnut
45E59	Walnut
45E71	Champagne
45E74	Cocoa Brown
45E77	Maroon
45E79	Cashew
45E93	Tea Rose
45E95	Flesh Pink
45E97	Deep Orange
45E99	Baked Clay
45FB2	Flourescent Dull Blue
45FBG2	Flourescent Dull Blue Green
45FRV1	Flourescent Pink
45FV2	Flourescent Dull Violet
45FY1	Flourescent Yellow Orange
45FYG1	Flourescent Yellow
45FYG2	Flourescent Dull Yellow Green
45FYR1	Flourescent Orange
45G00	Jade Green
45G02	Spectrum Green
45G05	Emerald Green
45G07	Nile Green
45G09	Veronese Green
45G12	Sea Green
45G14	Apple Green
45G16	Malachite
45G17	Forest Green
45G19	Bright Parrot Green
45G20	Wax White
45G21	Lime Green
45G24	Willow
45G28	Ocean Green
45G29	Pine Tree Green
45G40	Dim Green
45G82	Spring Dim Green
45G85	Verdigris
45G94	Grayish Olive
45G99	Olive
45N0	Neutral Gray 0
45N1	Neutral Gray 1
45N10	Neutral Gray 10
45N2	Neutral Gray 2
45N3	Neutral Gray 3
45N4	Neutral Gray 4
45N5	Neutral Gray 5
45N6	Neutral Gray 6
45N7	Neutral Gray 7
45N8	Neutral Gray 8
45N9	Neutral Gray 9
45R00	Pinkish White
45R000	Cherry White
45R02	Flesh
45R05	Salmon Red
45R08	Vermilion
45R11	Pale Cherry Pink
45R12	Light Tea Rose
45R14	Light Rouse
45R17	Lipstick Orange
45R20	Bush
45R22	Light Prawn
45R24	Prawn
45R27	Cadmium Red
45R29	Lipstick Red
45R30	Pale Yellowish Pink
45R32	Peach
45R35	Cora
45R37	Carmine
45R39	Garnet
45R43	Bougainvillaea
45R46	Strong Red
45R59	Cardinal
45RV02	Sugared Almond Pink
45RV04	Shock Pink
45RV06	Cerise
45RV09	Fuchsia
45RV10	Pale Pink
45RV11	Pink
45RV13	Tender Pink
45RV14	Begonia Pink
45RV17	Deep Magenta
45RV19	Red Violet
45RV21	Light Pink
45RV23	Pure Pink
45RV25	Dog Rose Flower
45RV29	Crimson

45RV32	Shadow Pink
45RV34	Dark Pink
45RV42	Salmon Pink
45T0	Toner Gray 0
45T1	Toner Gray 1
45T10	Toner Gray 10
45T2	Toner Gray 2
45T3	Toner Gray 3
45T4	Toner Gray 4
45T5	Toner Gray 5
45T6	Toner Gray 6
45T7	Toner Gray 7
45T8	Toner Gray 8
45T9	Toner Gray 9
45V01	Heath
45V04	Lilac
45V05	Mangod
45V06	Lavender
45V09	Violet
45V12	Pale Lilac
45V15	Mallow
45V17	Amethyst
45V91	Pale Grape
45V95	Light Grape
45V99	Aubergine
45W0	Warm Gray 0
45W1	Warm Gray 1
45W10	Warm Gray 10
45W2	Warm Gray 2
45W3	Warm Gray 3
45W4	Warm Gray 4
45W5	Warm Gray 5
45W6	Warm Gray 6
45W7	Warm Gray 7
45W8	Warm Gray 8
45W9	Warm Gray 9
45Y00	Barium Yellow
45Y02	Canary Yellow
45Y04	Acacia
45Y06	Yellow
45Y08	Acid Yellow
45Y11	Pale Yellow
45Y13	Lemon Yellow
45Y15	Cadmium Yellow
45Y17	Golden Yellow
45Y19	Napoli Yellow
45Y21	Buttercup Yellow
45Y23	Yellowish Beige
45Y26	Mustard

45Y28	Lionet Gold
45Y32	Cashmere
45Y35	Maize
45Y38	Honey
45YG00	Mimosa Yellow
45YG01	Green Bice
45YG03	Yellow Green
45YG05	Salad
45YG06	Yellowish Green
45YG07	Acid Green
45YG09	Lettuce Green
45YG11	Mignonette
45YG13	Chartreuse
45YG17	Grass Green
45YG21	Anise
45YG23	New Leaf
45YG25	Celado Green
45YG63	Pea Green
45YG67	Moss
45YG91	Putty
45YG93	Grayish Yellow
45YG95	Pale Olive
45YG97	Spanish Olive
45YG99	Marine Green
45YR00	Powder Pink
45YR000	Silk
45YR02	Light Orange
45YR04	Chrome Orange
45YR07	Cadmium Orange
45YR09	Chinese Orange
45YR14	Carame
45YR16	Apricot
45YR18	Sanguine
45YR20	Yellowish Shade
45YR21	Creme
45YR23	Yellow Ochre
45YR24	Pale Sepia
45YR31	Light Reddish Yellow
45YR61	Yellowish Skin Pink
45YR65	Atoll
45YR68	Orange
460	Sketch 72 Set C $356.40
462	Sketch 72 Set D $356.40

• **500 Copic Opaque White $9 75**
COPIC Opaque White is a water based white pigment used for highlight effects. It won't bleed into the base color so it gives sharp line definition and can be used on watercolor as well as other permanent ink surfaces.

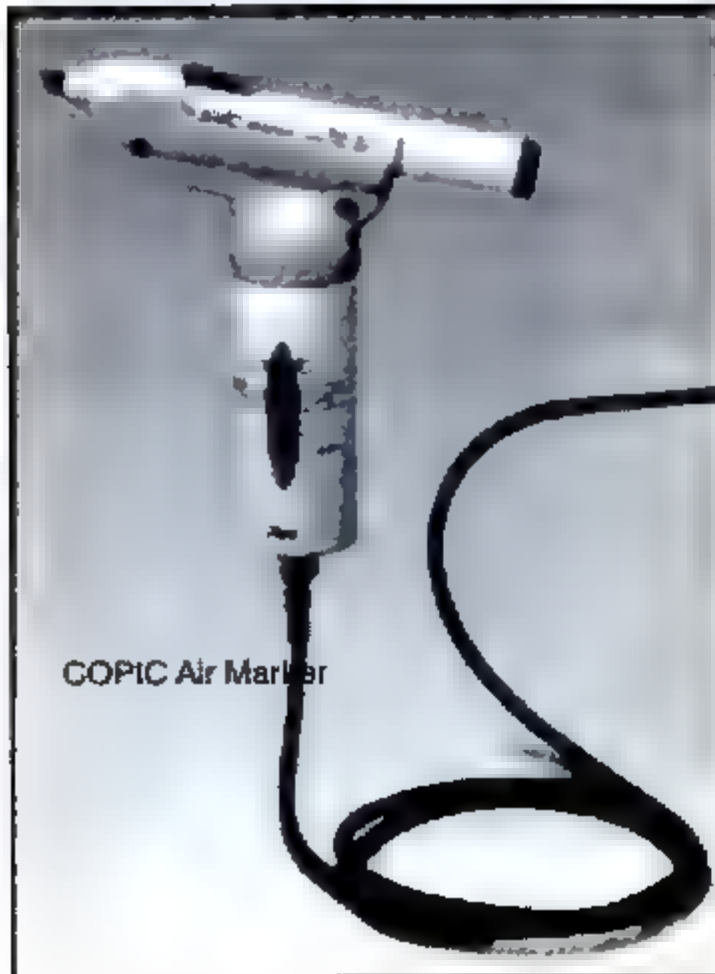|		
510	Copic Alcohol Marker Pad A4	$9.95
520	Copic Alcohol Marker Pad B4	$19.95
530	TOO Manga Manuscript Paper A4	$6.95
540	TOO Manga Manuscript Paper B4	$9.95
550	72 pc wire stand	$59.95
560	36 pc block stand	$29.95
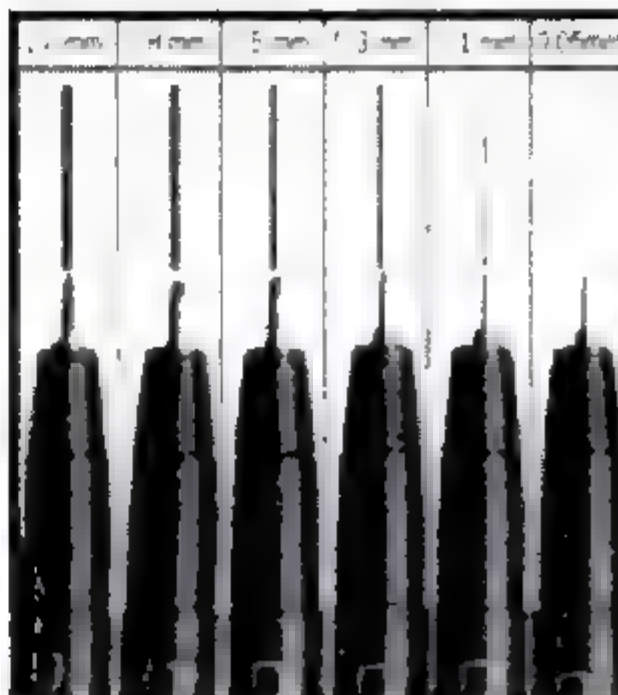
• **COPIC's MULTI LINERS** drawing pens allow drawing without annoying running ink. They are available in pens and brush. The pens come in a wide range of line widths (from .05 to 1.0 mm) while the brushes come in three different sizes small medium and large.

600	Multiliner 05	$2.50
610	Multiliner 0.1	$2.50
620	Multiliner 0.3	$2.50

630	Multiliner 0 5	$2 50
640	Multiliner 0 8	$2 50
650	Multiliner 1 0	$2 50
660	Multiliner Brush M	$2 95
670	Multiliner Brush S	$2 95
671	Sepia ML 05	$2 50
672	Sepia ML 1	$2 50
673	Sepia ML 3	$2 50
674	Grey ML 05	$2 50
675	Grey ML 1	$2 50
676	Grey ML 3	$2 50
680	Multiliner Set A	$15 00
690	Multiliner Set B	$20.00

• Prismacolor Art Pencil Sets
Professional Art Pencil Sets
Soft lead, permanent pigments, blendable
Water and smear resistant *No eraser*

• 12 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03596	$13.95
• 24 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03597	$26.95
• 48 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03598	$51.95
• 72 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03599	$76.95
• 96 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03601	$101.95
• 120 Color Pencil Set	
-ARSAN03602	$127.95

COPIC Air Marker

• 705 ABS-1 Kit $60.95
ABS-1 Kit COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use, just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the airbrush ABS-1 Kit. It comes with 1. Air Grip (where the pen goes in) 2. The air adapter (where the empty canister that the air grip screws on to. This canister is just a reservoir, it does not contain air.) 3. The air hose (this connects from the bottom of the air adapter to the top of the aircan). 4. The aircan 80 5. The air can holder (a foam square with 3 holes in it so that you can stand the different sizes of aircans.) This kit has all of the components in it for someone who would like to have portability but have to option to connect it to a compressor.

• 710   Starting Set ABS-2 $26 50
Set ABS-2. COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use, just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and theother to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the portable version of our airbrush system. The ABS-2 Kit comes with a D-60 can of compressed air and the Airgrip. This item is great for the artist on the move. ONLY the D-60 aircan can be attached directly to the air grip because of some special tubing inside the can. The other sizes of aircans 80 and 180 have to be attached to the hose and then to the air adapter. They hold more air but are not so portable.

720	Starting Set ABS-3	$28 50
730	Airgrip	$17 10
740	Air Adapter	$11 40
750	Airhose 1/4 to 1/8	$21 50
755	Airhose 1/8 to 1/8	$21 50
760	Air Can D-60	$8 95
763	Air Can 80	$10 95
765	Air Can 180	$12 95
770	Air Compressor	$186 50
910	NX Kit 2	$15 00
915	Too Professional Tone	$4 20

(See the website for over 20 different types and styles of tones.)

| 95 | Empty sketch marker | $3 50 |

• 5" Bow Compass & Divider
An all metal construction compass with replaceable needle and lead. Makes accurate 8" diameter circles. Extra pivot point for use as a divider.
-AR-494 5" Bow Compass $ 4 95

• 14 Piece Drafting Kit
Drafting Kit includes 12' architectural scale, 12x16 vinyl pouch, lettering guide pad, 6" compass, 6" divider, 10" 30/60 triangle 8" 45/90 triangle, 6" protractor, 6 ¾ french curve, soft pencil eraser, lead holder, mini lead pointer, erasing shield and a three pack of 2.0mm lead
-AR-BDK-1A 15 Piece Drafting Kit $38 95

• Sandpaper Pointer
Ideal for pointing pencils, leads, charcoal and crayons by hand.
-AR-3435-1 Sandpaper Pointer $ 95

MAGIC RUB
SANFORD 1954

• Magic-Rub Eraser
Eraser especially developed for sensitive surfaces, will not mark of smudge.
-AR-1954FC-1 Magic-Rub Eraser $ 95

• Blending Stumps
Soft paper felt with double pointed ends used for blending charcoal, pastels, etc. Use sandpaper to repoint

-AR-T811-1 ¼" x 5 ¼"	$.50
-AR-T812-1 5/16" x 6"	$.75
-AR-T813-1 13/32" x 6"	$1 00
-AR-T814-1 15/32" x 6"	$1.25
-AR-T817-1 5/8" x 6"	$1.50

• Sakura Pigma Micron
Available in six point sizes. Waterproof, chemical proof and fade resistant and will not smear or feather when dry

-AR-XSK005-49	20mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK01-49	25mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK02-49	30mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK03-49	35mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK05-49	45mm, black	$2.95
-AR-XSK08-49	50mm, black	$2.95
-AR-30061	3-pk, 25, 35, 45mm	$8.00
-AR-30062	All sizes, black	$16 00

• 12" Unisex Wooden Mannequin
Human Adult figure mannequin with perfect
proportions, adjustable joints for posing. Great for
modeling proportions involving angles. Made from
carved hardwood, 12" in height
-AR-CW201 12" Model   *SRP* $19.95

• Hand Mannequins
Life-like hardwood hand mannequins are fully
articulated. Comes in three sizes: male, female and
child.
-AR-HM3 14" Male Hand   SRP$49.95
-AR-HM4 12" Female Hand   SRP$46.95
-AR-HM5 9" Child Hand   SRP$42.95

• LIGHTWEIGHT SKETCH BOARDS
Made of strong, tempered masonite with cutout carry
handle. Metal clips and rubber band (included) hold
paper securely in place
-AR-SB1819 18 ½" X 19 ½"   SRP$9.95
-AR-SB2326 23 ½" X 26"   SRP$12.95

• PRESENTATION CASES (PORTFOLIO)
Spine mounted handle allows pages to hang properly to avoid wrinkling. Features 1"
black superior quality rings (Does not snag pages). Includes 10 archival pages (#ZX)
-AR-S1-2171 17" x 14"   SRP $68.95
-AR-S1-2241 24" x 18"   SRP $110.50
Refill Pages for Presentation Case
-AR-ZX17 17" x 14" 10 pack   SRP $23.95
-AR-ZX24 24" x 18" 10 pack   SRP $45.95

• KOH-I-NOOR ELECTRIC ERASER

• ALVIN ELECTRIS ERASER
Durable, high-quality UL-listed unit. Uses of a full 7" eraser eliminates the annoyance
of stopping constantly during heavy workload periods to insert short erasers.
Unbreakable LEXAN casing fits the hand comfortably and can be hung by a convenient
ring. The heavy duty AC motor eliminates the continual repair problems of typical
lightweight erasers. Motor cooling vent locations are designed to allow cool operation
even under heaviest workloads.
-AR-EE1754 With slip-chuck   SRP $85.00
• ERASER REFILLS
-AR-ER72 7" dark grey, ink, 1 doz   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER73 7" white, pencil, 1 doz   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER74 7" pink, pencil, 1 doz   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER88 7" white vinyl, ink or pencil, 1 doz   SRP $6.95

• ALL PURPOSE ELECTRIC SYSTEM
Designed to erase both lead and ink from
paper and film. Features a heavy-duty,
maintenance free 115v motor, protected by a
high-impact white LEXAN case. Maximum
efficiency with either the No. 287 white vinyl
strip eraser for paper or the specially
formulated no. 285 imbibed yellow strip
eraser for film. Includes a No. 287 strip
eraser
-AR-2800E All purpose Electric System
SRP $73.95

• KOH-I-NOOR ERASER REFILLS
-AR-ER285 Yellow, Imbibed, ink 10/box   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER287 Soft Vinyl, pencil, 10/box   SRP $5.95

• CORDLESS/RECHARGEABLE ERASER
Contains a trouble-free motor that delivers up to 4,500 rpm, fully charged. Versatile,
two-way operation –cordless or AC. Long lasting rechargeable battery, break resistant
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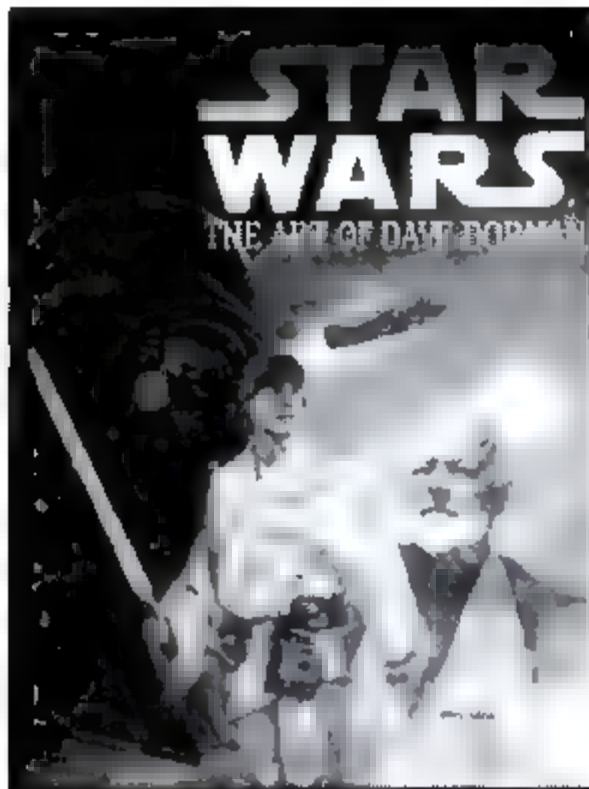
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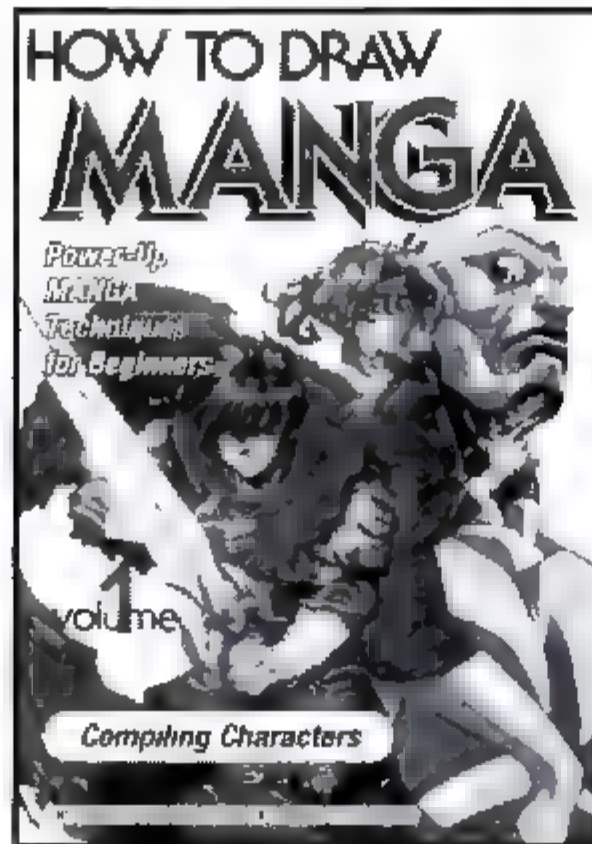
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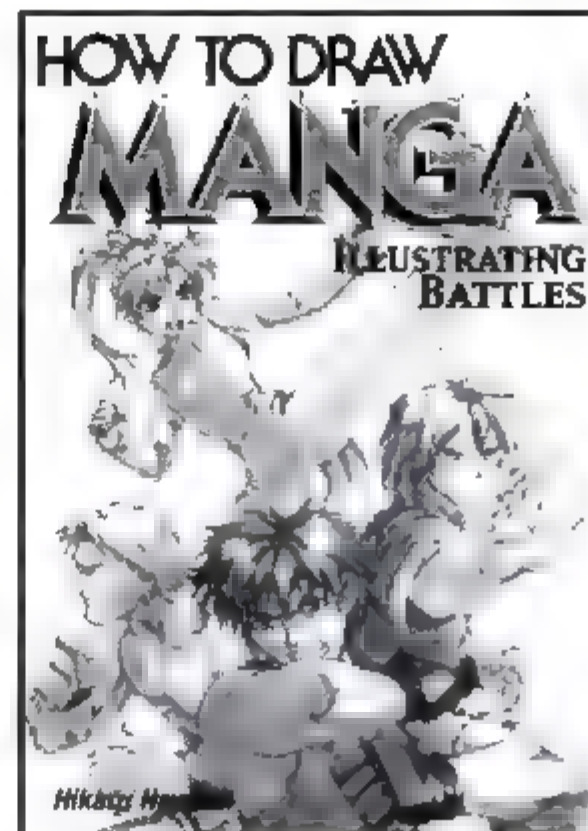
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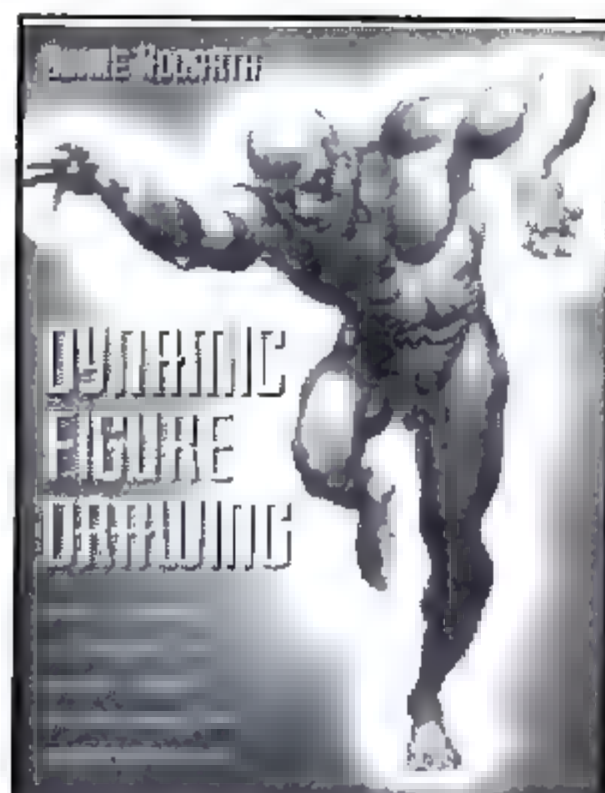
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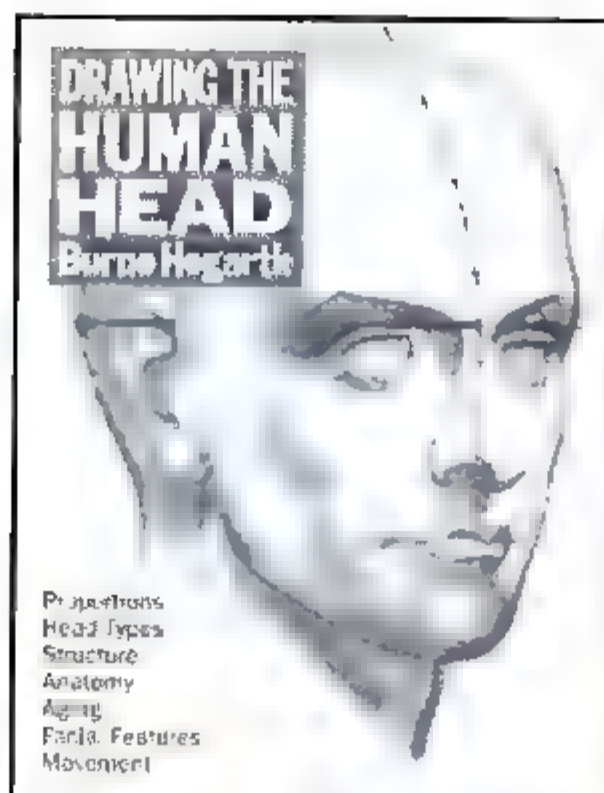
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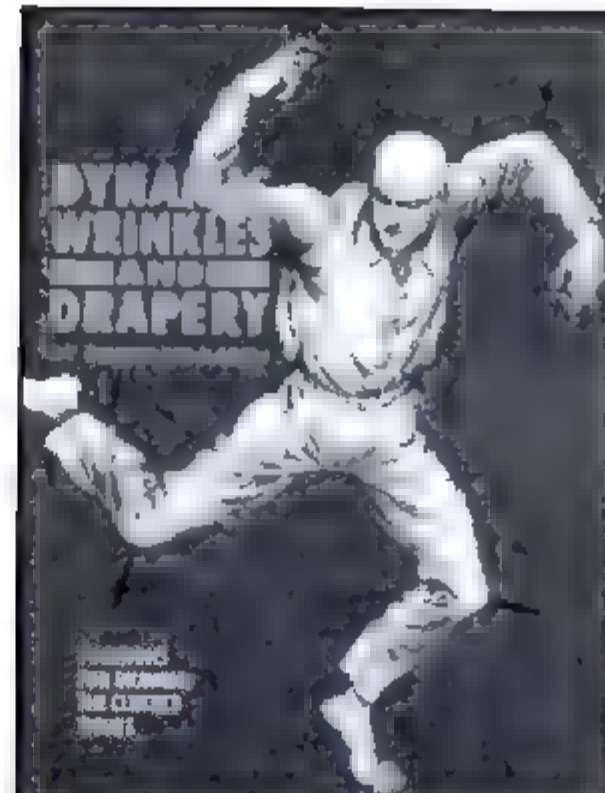
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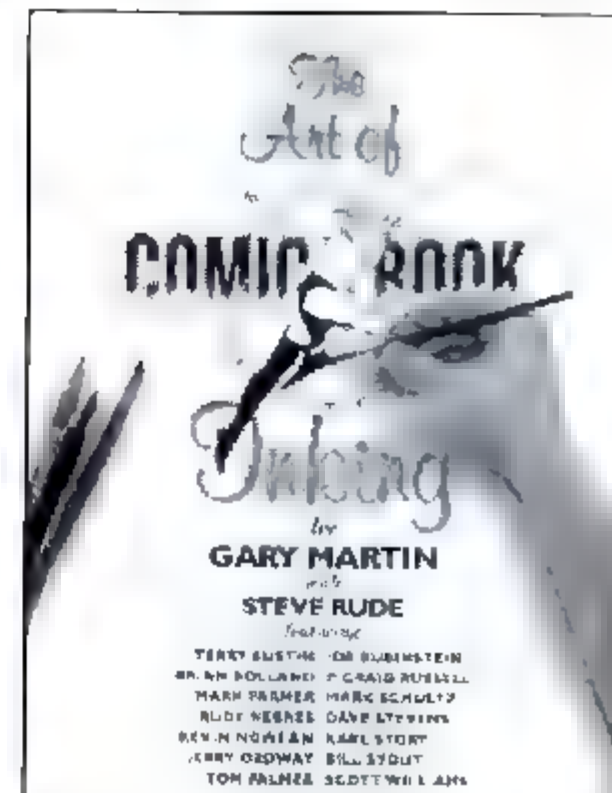
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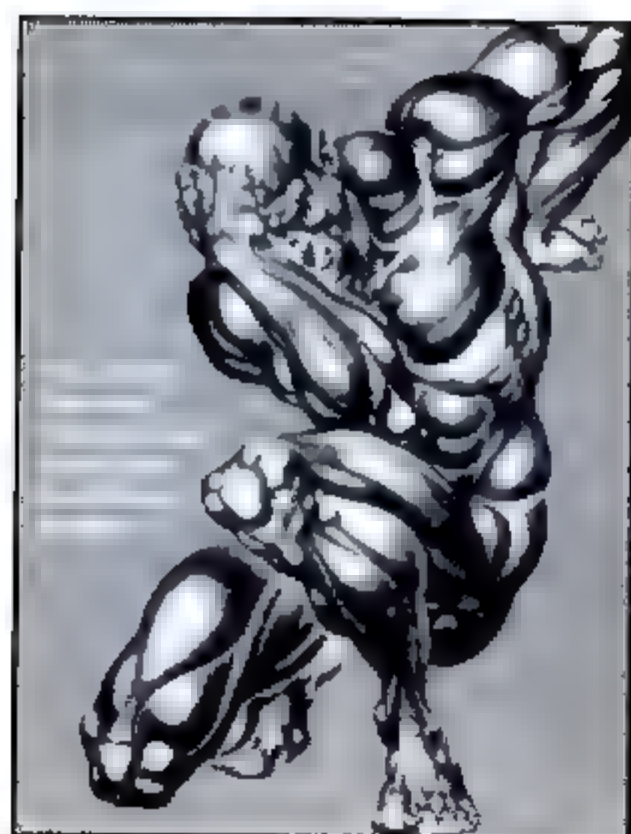
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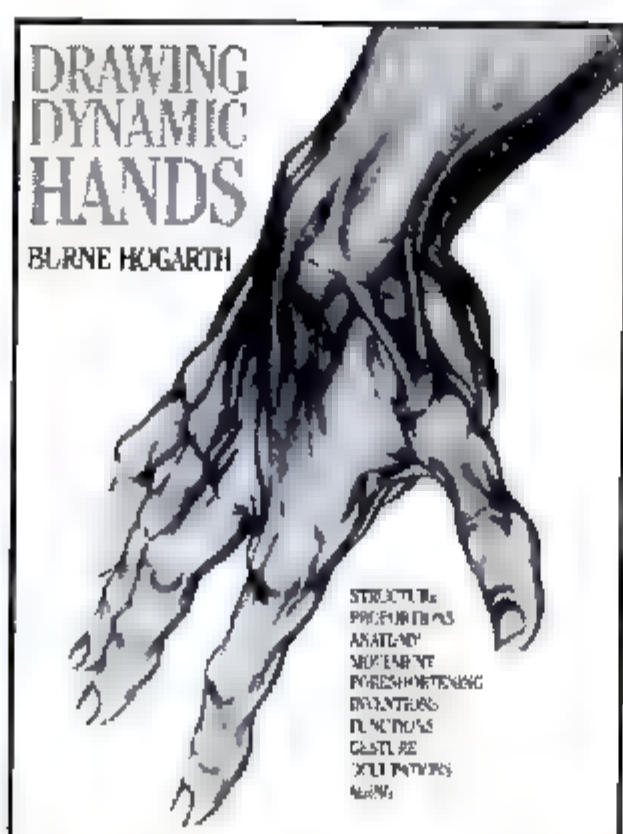
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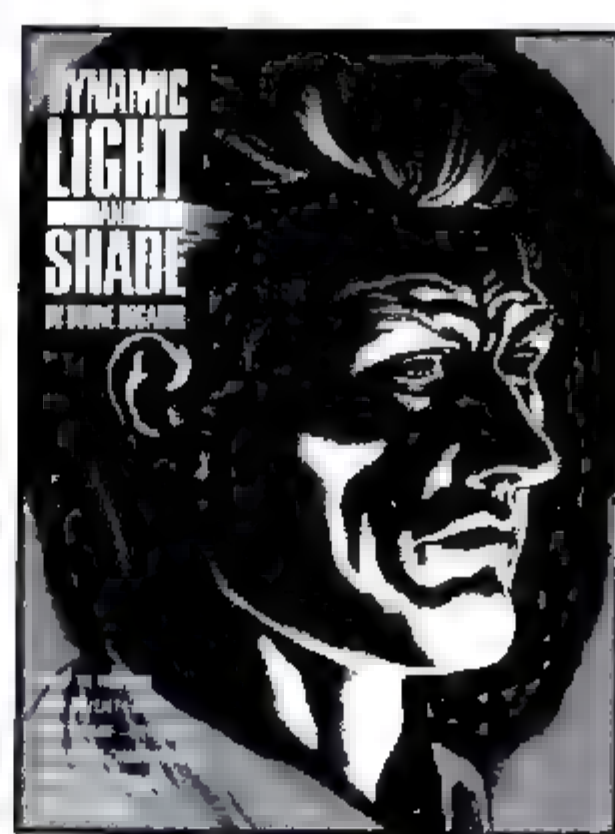
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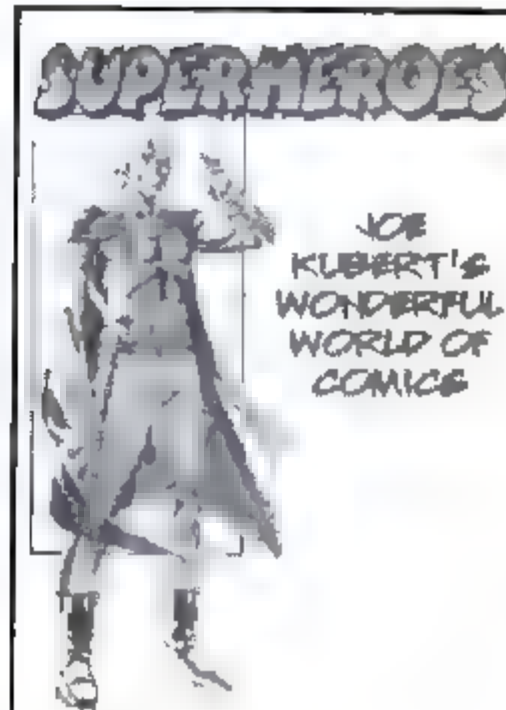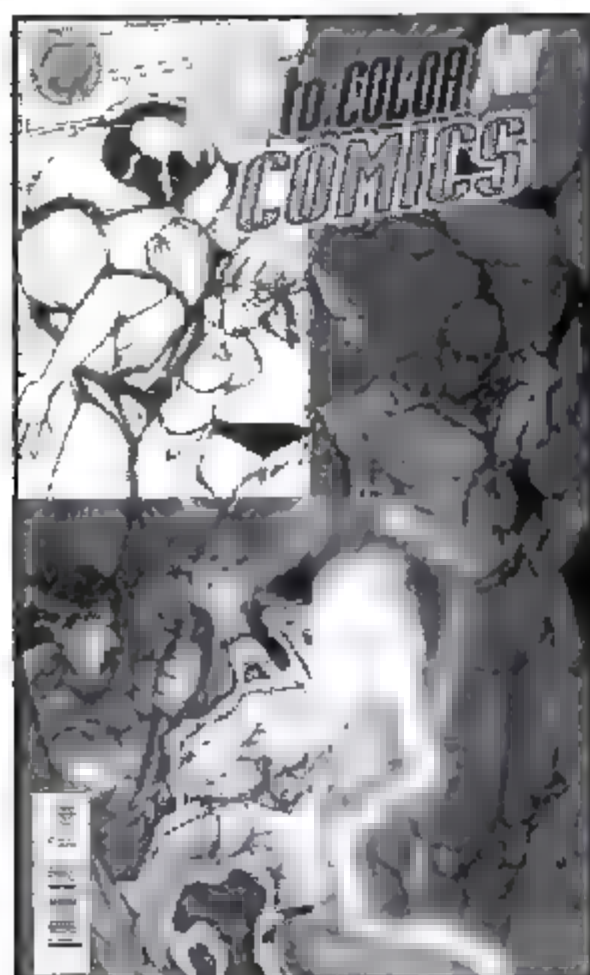
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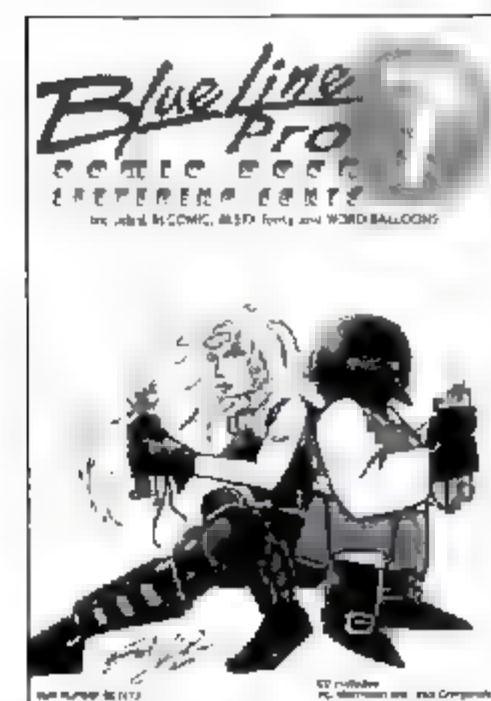
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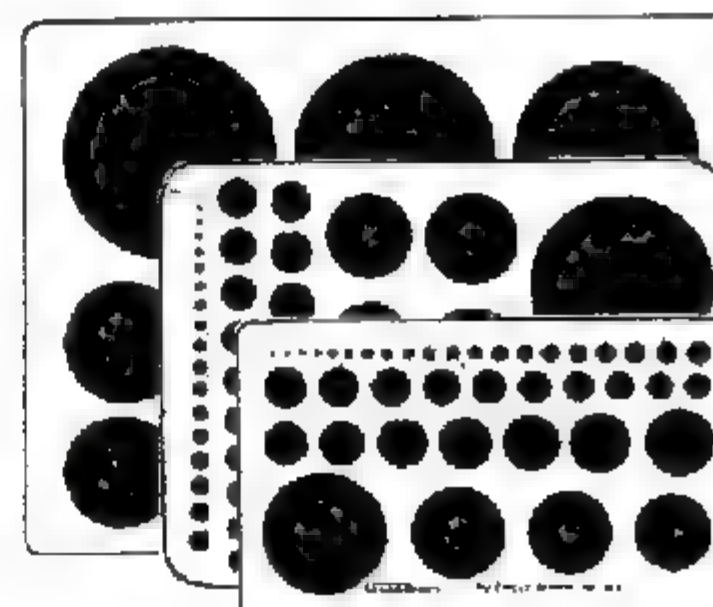
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MANGA IN MOTION

BY PAUL SIZER

this issue: GREY MATTERS

Well, since my last article focused on motion and punching and blasting and all kinds of speed-related stuff, I figured this issue's article could attend to a less evident area that is just as important to attend to for good looking comics: color theory. But since we're focusing on manga, most of the time these comics are originally published in black and white with grey toning. When I began looking towards producing my latest Little White Mouse series "Entropy Dreaming", I decided I wanted to try my hand at adding greyscale toning to my pages to try and emulate the Japanese comics I respected. In this installment, we'll take a look at different approaches to coloring that applies to color and black and white, as well as a digital approach to mimic the traditional Zip-A-Tone techniques of manga artists.

Example A

HEY BABY, HOW'D YOU LIKE TO BE GREYSCALE RENDERED?

HEY, HOW'D YOU LIKE TO PICK YOUR *TEETH* OUT OF THE CARPETING?

THINK BEFORE YOU INK!

For our examples this session, we'll use a panel featuring two trouble-makers from the notorious Bolt Harbor gang, The LolliPop Girls (Example A). This is the inked panel before any toning is done, so we can look at the spotting of black areas and compositional considerations. A panel should work in pure black and white, showing foreground, midground, and background, and not be too dependent on the coloring to rescue these attributes. As with any composition, areas of higher contrast come forward in the picture plane, while areas of less contrast tend to move back. The two figures both have a lot of black and white contrasting areas on them, balanced throughout their bodies and clothing, and more expressive ink lines. The girder in the upper left corner is inked with fewer variations in line weight and less shadow contrast, visually pushing it into the background of the composition. I usually ink most of my organic forms (bodies, clothing, hair) with a brush, and most of the inorganic forms (machinery, buildings, vehicles) are done with a technical pen.

FLAT TONE THEORY

If you look carefully at most Japanese manga, you'll see that most toners are pretty sparse with the grey tones for a majority of the comic, embodying the "less is more approach" to their color considerations. With the boon of computer coloring in the early nineties, the "overkill approach" to coloring choked most American comics with virtually unreadable colored pages so over-done and over Photoshoped that they defeated the purpose of coloring all together. Once again I myself turned to look at manga to see the strength of simplicity n color/greyscale theory. When I have colored pin-ups for my books from other professionals, THE most constant request is "Don't over-color it, just keep it really simple!"

In Example B I've just toned the background, leaving the figures untouched. With the background now less contrasty than the girls, they come forward visually in the panel. I've kept the toning flat so that it doesn't become too busy and fight visually with what I want to be up front in the composition.

Example B

Example C

In Example C I'm using the toning to further refine where I want the viewer's eye to go, in this case the black haired girl. By using a low contrast palette of greys on the blonde girl, I can de-emphasize her visual importance in the panel, while still letting her remain closer to the viewer because of her relative size in the panel. Your eye moves past the blonde girl to go to the black haired girl. By leaving the upper left girder monotone, it keeps it pushed to the back of the composition. Also notice the shading on the blonde girl is very simple and hard lined. This is a personal preference of mine; I ike how it makes the figures appear more like animated film cels. Which leads us to...

BY THE POWER
OF GREYSCALE!

Well, someone said with great power comes great responsibility (before we go any further, trivia-masters; I know it was Peter Parker's Uncle Ben who said that...), and never is it more true than in computer coloring!

As I've said in nearly article I've written, just because you CAN do something in the computer doesn't always mean you SHOULD do it. Example D shows what I consider a fully rendered greyscale panel. Given the huge range of greys I could use, I'm still watching the contrast levels to move the eye through the panel like I want it to move. In this example I'm using a more airbrush-like approach to my shading and highlighting, always being mindful of not over-doing it! When I do use shading, it's to help define the contour of objects and body parts. Most of the shadows are soft, indicating a pretty even lighting with a single directional source off panel. Most of the skin tone rendering is pretty soft, while areas like the blonde girl's vinyl jacket have more defined highlight areas, making it look like the jacket has a high shine surface on it.

Example D

WITH PROPER HIGHLIGHT RENDERING, YOU TOO CAN HAVE A SHINY HEINEY!
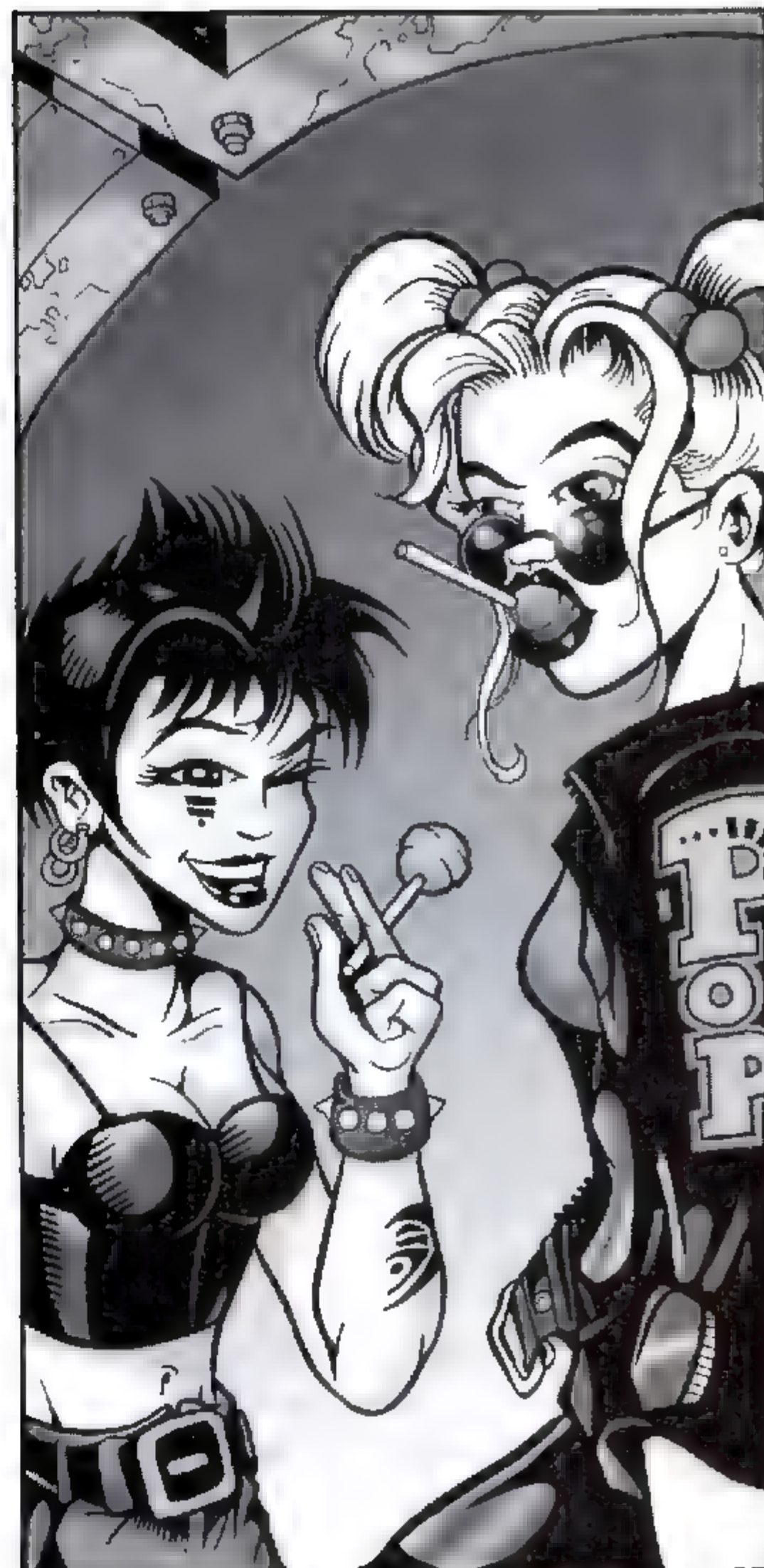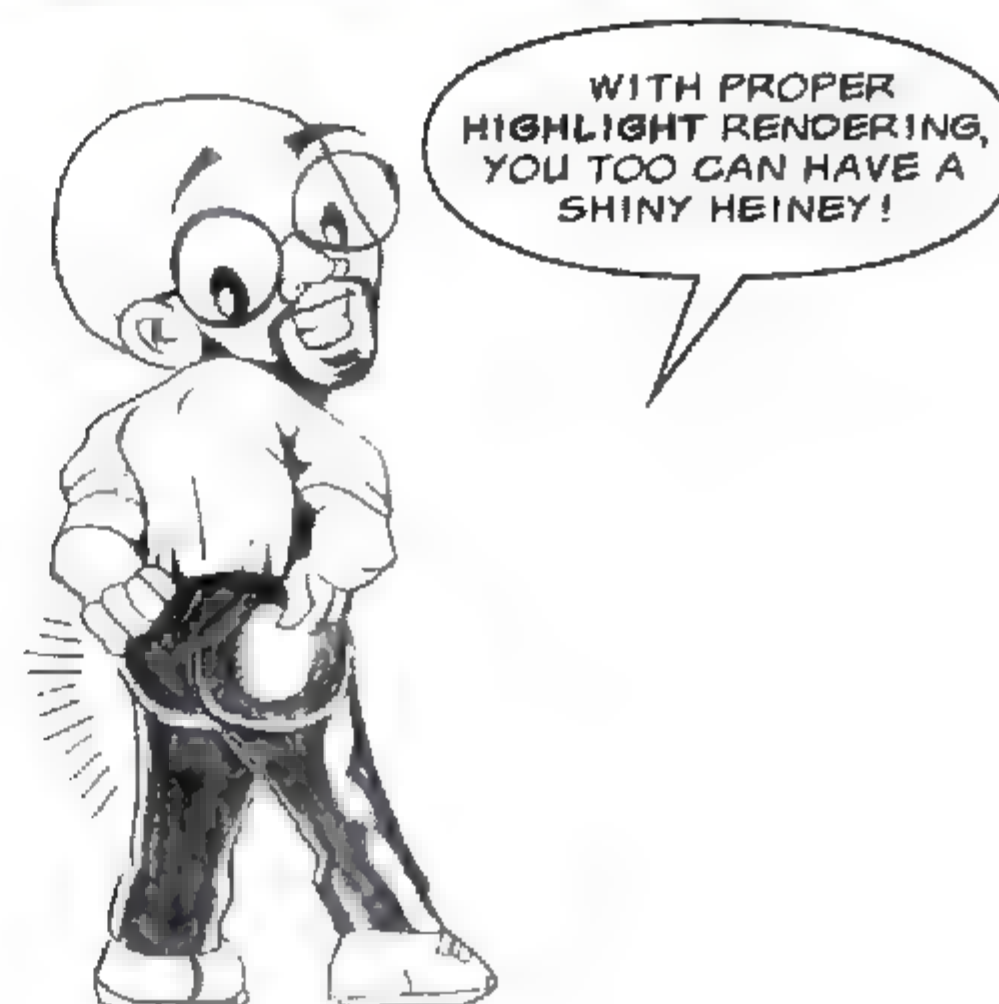
Example E

Also notice that the feathering contour lines on the black haired girl's halter top and hair give it a slightly more textured surface, as opposed to the vinyl jacket's super slick surface shown with only hard shadow lines (Example E). Again, with more shading detail and contrast in the two girls, I've kept the background gradation pretty simple to make sure it doesn't compete with the girls.

I'D JUST LIKE TO GO
ON RECORD THAT IF I
HAD HAIR I WOULD NOT
DO THIS TO IT!

BIG FAT HAIRY DEAL

O.K., I may seem like the last person to lecture about hair, but here are a few rendering tips I've found to work. Obviously there s a million ways to represent hair, but I like to keep things simple and graphic. Hair in manga tends to be very stylized anyway; so study the different rendering styles your favorite artists use.

With lighter hair, you can see the internal contours and shape/direction of the hair by lines, which I like to keep to a minimum. Too many lines will make hair look stringy, so I usually just concentrate the contour lines on major directional areas, and at points where the hair comes together. With darker and black hair, you tend to see less of the internal contours, so I like to use select highlight areas to indicate what the hair's doing. Feathering in the highlight areas shows the stranding of the hair without rendering every single hair. (Example F)

HALFTONE DOT-COM

Here's a simple way in PhotoShop to get the effect of Zip-a-Tone pattern dots: Tone your drawing in the greyscale mode, doing whatever effects/shading/highlighting you wish. I usually save this version of my drawing at this point as a greyscale TIFF file and do a Save As to make a new version of this file to apply the effect to (thus preserving your original greyscale piece).

On the new y saved file, under the Image menu, go to the Mode submenu and choose "Bitmap...". A Bitmap menu box w ll come up with two option areas, Resolution and Method. In the Resolution box, type whatever resolution you've been working on (I usually scan my black and white art in at 600 dpi, color/greytone it at the same resolution, then change it to bitmap while keeping it at 600 dpi to maintain best clarity.) In the Method section, you'll see a list of Bitmap translation methods like "50% Threshold", "Pattern D ther", etc. The one we'll use is "Halftone Screen...", which will bring up the "Halftone Screen" submenu option box which has the option areas Frequency, Angle, and Shape. Under Frequency, type 60 lines/inch Under Angle, type 45 degrees. Under Shape (meaning the shape of the halftone dots), choose Round. Then click OK.

Presto! Your drawing will change from a greyscale with continuous tone greys to a bitmap, black and white bitmap drawing with the greytones represented by varying series of dots, the same way a traditional artist would add greyscale to a drawing using Zip-A-Tone transfer films. The experimenting part of this is how coarse of a dot screen you want for a halftone dot. In the Frequency option box, the lower a number you put in, the bigger and more pronounced the dot screen will be. For a reference, most newspapers are printed at around 60-85 lines per inch. My suggestion is to play around with different frequency numbers to get the coarseness of dot you want. My example here is a dot screen of 60 lines/inch (Example G). If you want really big old school Golden Age comic page dot screens like a Roy Liechtenstein painting, go as low as 10-20 lines/inch. Remember, once you convert your greyscale drawing to a halftone bitmap it won't go back to being a continuous tone greyscale file, so always keep an original greyscale version and make copies of that to convert!
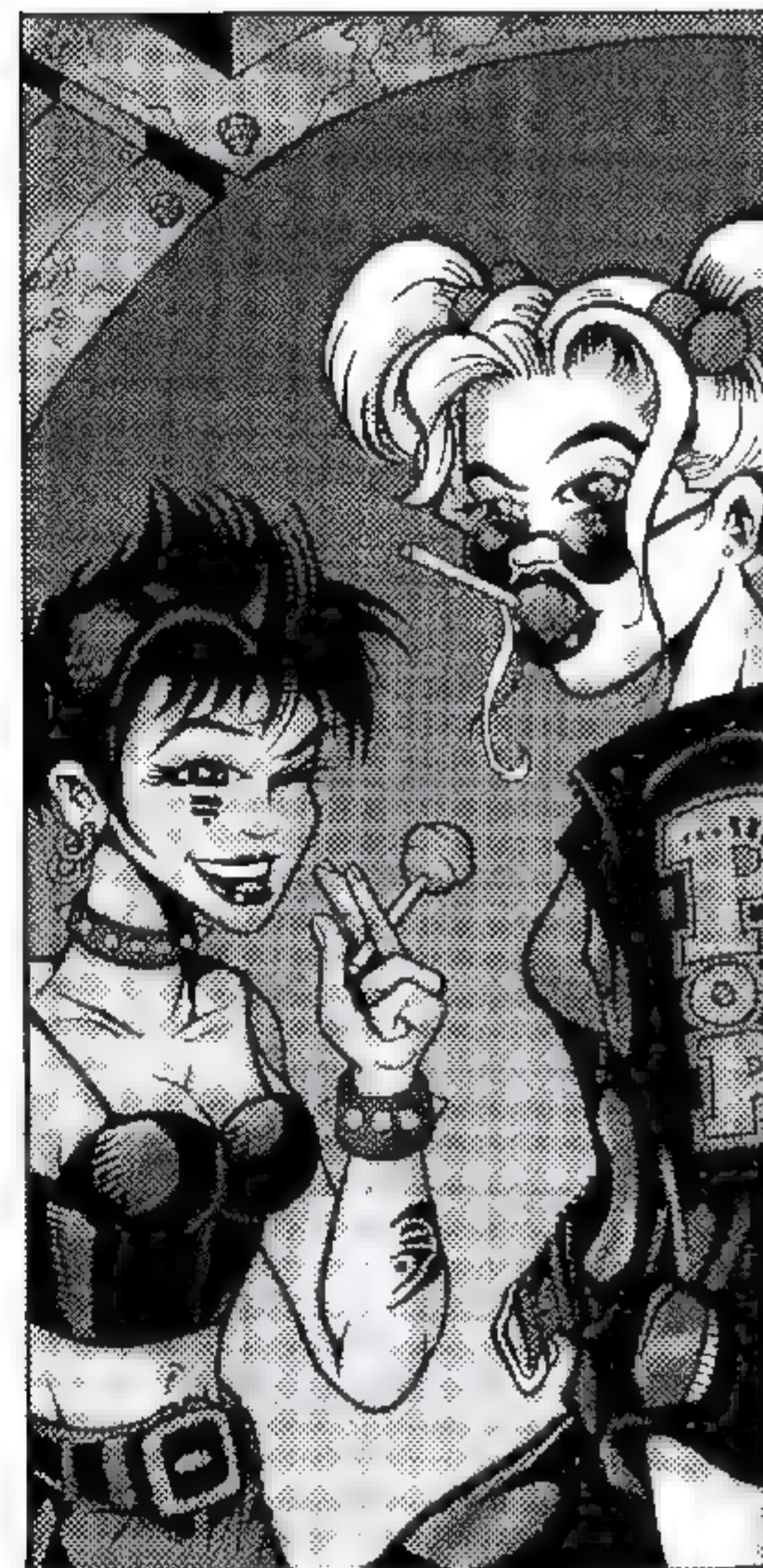
MANGA AND ANIME PICKS

Here's another short list of anime and manga I've found that stands out from the ever-growing crowd. Check them out if you can:
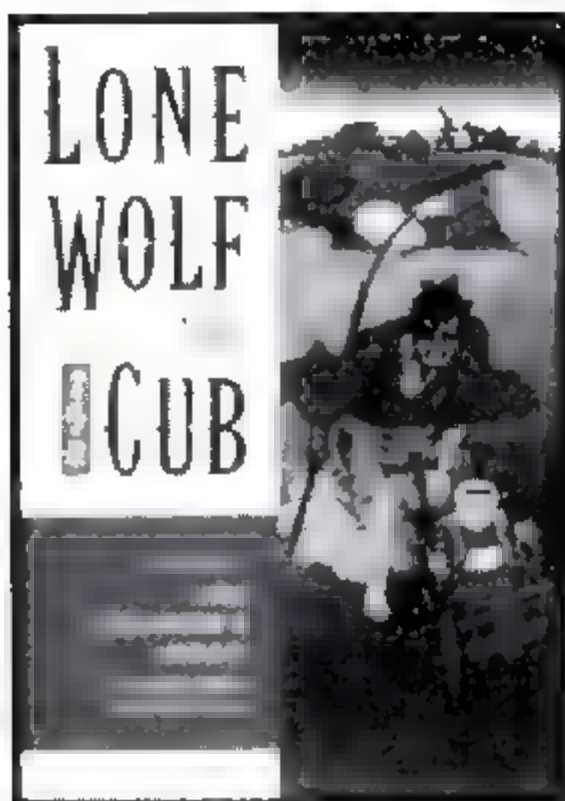
LONE WOLF AND CUB
Dark Horse is re-releasing Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima's groundbreaking manga series about a lone samurai and his young son in it's original small book format. Back to basics for new fans, and a good study in the true power of manga as a visual storytelling medium, as most pages have little or no dialogue. A must have!

BIG O
This hyper cool Japanese cartoon is currently running on the Cartoon Network and is a unique mix of film noir, Batman: The Animated Series, and numerous giant Japanese robot cartoons. Very slick animation with subtle touches and surprising quiet parts to balance the "big robot trashing the enemy" sequences.

SERIAL EXPERIMENTS LAIN
Yoshitoshi Abe's very weird (in a good way) series about a young girl and her mysterious connection to a dead classmate through her home computer. Very dark and moody, this series just keeps getting more complex and weird, but has some really cool ideas about the interface of normal life and the cyber-reality of the Internet.

BLUE SUBMARINE NUMBER 6
Usually the combining of traditional cel animation and computer generated animation is clunky and awkward. Not so with this series, which does a great job of mixing the two in a tale of a flooded world and the high tech submarine force that protects it from evil sea mutants.

Letters Forum

Hello,

Lets start with your magazine. It's the best I have seen in years. I've been collecting comics for over 20 years (if you consider I was getting them when I was seven). The Blue Line Pro comic book supplies are great. We (BOMARC COMICS) are trying to get an independent comic off the ground, not to mention a role-playing game. We have just printed up a batch of t-shirts to sell to generate capital to produce our first comic and future projects. I was dropping you a line to check out our web sight take into consideration that we are working from a small budget and doing the best we can. The web sights at ANGELFIRE are free for any other independent trying to get a web sight up and running. www.ANGELFIRE.COM/IN2/ BOMARCIND. You can tell that there has been little activity in our sight, word of mouth is the only way people have been finding us but that's going to change. There is a preview issue on the sight for people to look at and sample of our artwork. My want list for future artists to see in Sketch is Kyle Holtz, Tim Vigil, Berni Wrightson, and Neal Adams.

Thank you for your time,
BOMARC COMICS
Todd

P.S. If you have a problem getting in the sight, try bomarc comics in the search. It works better

Hey Todd,

Thanks for the kind words and keep up the good work. The plan to have multiple venues for your idea is a good direction to go. Diversify! Diversify! Diversify!

Thanks,
M2

Dear Sketch Magazine.

This to inform you what I like and do not like about Sketch. First off, I am glad to see yourselves and others have a teaching magazine. Years ago I tried to read these silly, almost cryptic articles in publications such as Comic Scene, Comics Journal and such, where people like John Byrne, Bob Layton and others tried to make producing comics was similar to teaching a blind cave man warp physics, while singing in ryme. In others words, they complained a lot about how stupid and ignorant the non pro was, while Zeapham Cochran style did not say a lot they did was find 15 different ways to say ink, pencils, writing, and so on. While just keep repeating how hard it was to break in over and over. And Wizard later on, just kept repeating standard art facts-anyone who is a serious artist-could find in better places. In other words neither was very helpful

Now, I like that you trying to teach basic art and writing techniques, but what I love to see is more things with computer coloring logos and such. Right I am trying to explore how to computer color, design logos using word art and office 2000 I find that I can design faster and better comic book logos using the computer that trying to do it the old way. I also find that writing is easier using Office 2000-let along Blueprint programs make interesting cover logos and book cover design. I am way passed the simple high school art lessons presented in places like Wizard and other similar publications. I know how to design a page layout. Pencil a page, create characters and such, all having to not rely on "superhero" Marvel/DC comic cliches. These are for some ten year old to learn.

What I do not like and feel is a dangerous topic to repeat over and over is your contributors to annually rely on those tired, old key comic book buzzwords superhero, supervillian, mutant and so on. You are only training the next generation to think in terms and creative thinking popularized, overused and beaten to death onto extinction by the likes of Marvel, DC Image and Wizard the magazine edited by Satin-so Frank Miller claims. If comics are in a big slump it is because some people believe that the term comic is simply another word for superhero Marvel or DC and that dear people just isn't so. Comics can be anything from science fiction to romance or funny animals. It is the narrow minds of yourselves, the superhero nazi's and your contributors to think only within this single genre-no matter how profitable and popular it once may have been. Comics need to grow up. And to quote Master Yoda-COMICS, COMIC CREATORS AND FANS NEED TO UNLEARN WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED.

Otherwise comics may just go away or at least stagnate further. Comics need to also dump the self important, serious, over thought and self conscious, non throw away mentality. Not say to thought keep your collections, but stop thinking of them as gold or rare wine. Comics are junk jewelry or soda pop. Also comics need to get fun again. GET OUT OF THIS-IT'S ADULT IT'S ART-IT'S PERFECT NONSCENCE. WHO CARES HOW MUCH THE FIRST SUPERMAN COMIC COST-ASK IS IT ANY GOOD. IS IT WORTH READING-DOES IT BRING TO AN AGE UNDREAMED OF, ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST, IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY. That way every kid of all ages should ask and so should all of you reading this Thanks-I hope this is understood. If no-READ AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL YOU DO.

Oh and please! Will the amateurs stop send me crap submissions. I'm not TALKING ABOUT

THE THREE OR FOUR PROFESSIONAL LOOKING PENCILER'S AND INKERS. You guys are good. Bravo good just-send again or write again. I am talking to the ten-year olds with bad Bulls-eye art, Spawn art, Mister Miracle and bad space porno art. If you are not up to say Barry Smith or Wayne Boring and John Buesema-do not send me your doodle sketches or rude pinups. OK! I will not hire ever, unless you meet minimum pro standards. If your work shows to talent the likes of this magazine or any other will never help you

Send information, art, guide lines whatever pertains to you to Maveric Comics Inc, 6142 Torresdale Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa, 19135 3718 USA. cctgt2@aol.com

The Next Step in Science Fiction Comic Entertainment a shared universe of high space opera and space western frontier fiction and universe where great god-like humans wage an eternal war against good and evil from Atlantis-Prime to Hades Prime. Visit an universe of high adventures and worlds undreamed of. Visit Maveric Comic Inc. Studios Onward-Upward Maveric-the home of new ideas. The home of intelligent, quality comics for true believers and foreword thinking fans like.

Come visit my homepage at aol.com or look up my CBG Comic Club page. Here's a breakdown on my submission guidelines. No superhero material. Must be qualified at least high or college level professional artist or writer even if you are a novice or unknown. Must a gentleman or lady, this no time for John Byrne Ego's the size of planets. Pre madonna or rude sob's need not apply. Insultors or non team players, forget it. And most of all, if Marvel thought you stuff was crap, then so will we. If of course, they passed on the next Frank Frazetta or Will Eisner, welcome aboard

Wow, Joseph! That's great! Thanks for writing us. We always appreciate people letting us know how we are doing

M2

PS: Keep up the good PR work.

Hi Sketch,

First, I want to say that I love the magazine and your web site and that it's about time someone went ahead and did something like this. So a thanks goes to those people. I have all the magazines and support Sketch but what I haven't found yet was some specific information. I was wondering if you would know or maybe you know someone to connect by e-mail. Stuff like what percentage do the printers reduce the 1 X17 (I think it's 45%) art page or do we have to shrink it ourselves? Do we have to scan it and shrink it ourselves then save it to a disk then send it to the printers? What font size to work at 11X17? Questions like that, if you can help me find who to reach that would be great!!!

Thanks, Fred

Fred,

If your sending your original to be used by the printer then they will reduce them to the actually size. If your scanning the artwork and sending a disk to the printer then you'll need to reduce them approximately 40%. This will depend on bleed and trim of the comic.

As far as the font size, it really depends on the font. In a past lettering article we discussed that if you letter the original size then you'll want to reduce the page to printed size (approx 40%) to see if the lettering is readable and hold up once reduced. Look at other comics that you like the lettering in and compare your reductions.

Hopfully this has helped a little

Bob

Dear M2,

In response to Jon Malin's letter (SKETCH #8, Letters Forum), I understand the frustration he feels. I'm also a self-published independent creator who has to deal constantly with, "How can I, one single poor bastard, afford to get the exposure I feel my work warrants?" Ad space in trade magazines, any magazine, for that matter is, to say the least, expensive as hell and consequently out of reach. As a result, it seems that I spend more time looking for exposure venues than actually putting pencil and ink to paper. That dog, as they say, don't hunt. I'm ready to offer an honest solution to this problem that Jon, myself, and probably countless others face, but first I'd like to defend you, M2. It appeared (perhaps unintentionally so, but still) that Jon was taking SKETCH Magazine, and you in particular, to task for not being independent-friendly. This, in my experience, is simply not the case. We independent guys have to remember that nobodys going to bend over backwards just because we feel our work is "superior," "the new wave," "the cutting edge," etc. WE EXIST IN A CAPITALIST REPUBLIC, and no matter how progressive or liberal we like to think we are, we'd all better, right before bed, bow and pray that it stays that way. Our economic system, with all its glitches, like it or not, IS THE BEST IN THE WORLD AND THE MOST ACCESSIBLE TO THE AVERAGE PERSON ANYWHERE. Now that I'm done shouting, I'd like to also caution anyone about holding the press in disdain for not seeing our total genius. They live off ad revenue as well as subscriptions, more so, in most cases, and giving away free publicity is ludicrous. Every dog's gotta eat. If the independent creator is "the future of comics," then we can't sit around whining like children. And we can't continue to give our bread' n' butter away on the Internet for free ("Hey, everybody! Here's my comic! No charge, because I'm essentially trying to tell you I've assigned no value to the work I produce! Enjoy!") We've got to rise to our particular challenges, and herein lies my idea. As I've mentioned, full-page, full-color ads in magazines are out of our reach. .individually. But if a group of us pooled our money and designed an ad including a l of our individual properties in one shot, then the economics might be more feasible. If ten of us connected, created a print ad (as well as Internet ad banners), and threw, say, for the sake of argument, $25.00 into the pot, then that advertising exposure is in our grasp. You will still have full control/responsibility for your own web site, book, etc. Everybody's exposure goes up. We get noticed. Some of us gain followings. And that's when the news media comes a' calling. If nothing else, we as creators may make connections or friends, and might just find our next favorite comic. This isn't a new idea. I'm positive I'm not the first to think of it, but I haven't heard anyone else come up with any solutions, either. The simple fact is, we're all in this thing together, but working alone. I'm not talking about creating a publishing company, just an attitude of mutually-beneficially cooperation. This way, we'll get our heads straight and once again see the press and media outlets as our friends, and not some Old Boys Club. And, more often than not, that means money. Working together, we may be able to spread the burden out.

KLAUS http://www.klausandfigg.com

Hi Klaus,

Thanks for the defense. As for KLAUS' idea, I think it has merit. Stop by his web-site and let him know what you think. As for him responding to Jon Marlin's letter, that is what we would like to see more of. If you have something to say about what someone else said in here, write in and let
him or her know. Let's get some dialogue going and trade some ideas.

Thanks,
M2

Dear Sketch,

I have been drawing for years and one thing has been holding me up from feeling my penciled pages look as soft and clean as the pro's. Do they use a specific tool, or does it all just come down to softness of lead?

David Freeman
nhfreemans@aol.com

David,

I'm not sure that I follow where your going with this. As far clean many pro's layout thier pages on a piece of paper. Then they enlarge it to fit the comic book page and using a light box they illustrate the final page. This keeps excessive erasing and redraws to a minimum.

Bob

Blue Line Pro,

You're getting better and better every week. Issue 8 was the first I'd ever seen Dave Dorman's work. He's now one of my favorite artist's alongside David Mack. The rest of my e-mail is a suggestion for a column in the future. I have friends that enjoy creating massive stories and casts of characters. They have Splinters, Donatellos, Michaelangelos, Raphaels, Leonardos and foot soldiers in their stories. They have Things, Mr.Fantastics, Human Torches, Invisible Women and Doom Bots. There are no Dr Dooms or Shredders though. I see the same trend in the comic store too. I think aspiring comic creators and established ones need to be reminded of the importance of the bad guy. You could have an article delving into the makings of a good bad guy. One that's not flat but believable and scary. I'm a little tired of comics that establish their bad guy by simply having him kill someone helpless at the beginning.

Thanks for your time
Aspiring Illustrator,
Joe Slucher

Hi Joe,

I know exactly what you mean Joe. In a world of grays, sometimes it's hard to see where characters stand. It can seem that everyone is a good guy and bad guy at the same time. I'm a firm believer in the dynamics of good storytelling. A hero can only be as great as his villain can. The two forces feed off each other. The art of building these characters into believable people is something that should be not taken lightly. Story should never be sacrificed for flashy graphics, gimmicks, or speed. The plot, theme, characters, and presentation, whether though words or pictures, are the backbone of a story in whatever form, comic, movie, book, etc... Without them, you just have a mush of creativity and talent stuck in a dish of week old lime Jell-O. Sounds like a good idea for an article though. I'll look into it.

M2

Hello Joe!

Thanks for your letter. We're very pleased that we were able to introduce you to the great talent of Mr. Dave Dorman. I urge you to check out his website. pack a lunch; you're going to be there a while. for tons of great imagery that you're sure to enjoy. From cool Dorman exotica such as concept work for the most recent line of Aliens toys and behind-the-scenes G.I. Joe material to his mainstream Star Wars fare, Dave's site is a real treat for anyone that is interested in
great fantastic illustration. And make sure you check out Rail.

And you and your friends enjoy Donatello and the gang, eh? Glad to hear that there are more die-hard Turtles fans out there keeping me company. Get ready for some great Turtle drawing inspiration, as word has it that action director John Woo is going to do a new Turtles movie – not to mention that ever-cool Kevin Eastman, the Heavy Metal maven and Turtle master himself, is starting work on a brand new Turtles book! Keep those sais and pencils sharp, Joe.

F

Hey Chris,

I want to start off by saying thank you for writing such informative articles. They are helping me get started in coloring pages for a hobby and maybe someday for a job. I have read most of your articles so far, but I cant find the first issue where you discuss layout anywhere. I hit all the local comic shops and also hit a store in the city "NYC" to find the first ish, but to no avail. I need to know how you set up the page in Photoshop so you can lay the "ink" back on the colored page after you color it. I have tried to "figure it out" but I am totally lost on the set up of the comic page. I know you are very busy but anyway you can help me would be appreciated immensely. Thank you for your time and please keep writing the great articles ...

Jamie Williams...

Jamie,

We have posted Chris's article from issue one on our website. Go to bluelinepro.com and click on Sketch then go to past articles.

Bob

Dear Sketch,

I have four issues of my comic book drawn and inked but I'm not computer savvy enough at this time to letter them or color the cover on my computer. How much should I expect to pay to have a twenty-four-page comic book lettered and a cover colored? Any help or info would be great. Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,
Jay Carvajal

Hi Jay,

Depends on whom you use and how fast they are. Most professionals will give you an estimate but their hourly rate can be expensive. Usually it's an issue of how much you want to spend and/ or if your letterer/colorist really cares about your project. As many of you know, money is not something that is easily thrown around in this market, especially for the independents. My advice to you is to find someone who loves to work with comics and then worry about how much it's going to cost you.

M2

Mr. Hickey,

Hello, my name is Darren Calvert. I've been avidly following your "Survivor" column in Sketch magazine. While the art and writing tips are always welcome, this is what I'm really interested in: the process of taking a concept from initial rumblings in the back of my brain to full-blown comic success story. I can' wait to unleash my ideas on the world. I'm looking forward to seeing the saga of Race Danger unfold. If you ever add a fan art section to racedanger.com maybe you can include the attached piece.

Darren

Darren,

As you've probable notice that the "survivor"article has been missing in the past couple issues of sketch. The reason is like most cre-

ators the DAY JOB and FAMILY sometimes takes presi dent over the creative work. With the success of Sketch and Blue Line Pro and the fact that my wife and I had our second son earlier this years has added up to many late nights. But Race Danger is definite in the plans to be released next year. I've just got to figure out how to hold a bottle, a pencil and work on the computer all at once.

Thanks for the great artwork
Bob

I read your interview in Sketch magazine. The article on you was very interesting. I have a few questions for you about the Major Power illustra tion. What size did you scan your drawing in at? Does size matter? What size did it print out at?

Sincerely,
J.W.

Hi J.W.

My drawing was done on 9x12 paper but I made sure the image would fit on 81/2 x 11 in case it ended up on a standard photocopy machine. Actually the size could be larger or smaller as long as it stays in that proportion. I reasoned that these companies might be using the image on their stan dard copiers and would want that for convenience. Of course almost everyone can blow up or reduce images, either on photocopiers or inside their com puters.

I use Corel Photopaint instead of Adobe Photoshop which is basically the same thing. I was able to scan in the image at 100% and print it out on my regular printer. As I said in the article, by emailing it (or copying on a disk if you want), the image could be fed straight to a high quality colorcopier and look pretty good compared to my inkjet.

A lot of people draw 1 and 1/2 times larger than the finished work because reducing it will "hide" the small glitches and roughness. I knew they were going to reduce Major Power very small for reprint on t-shirts and in the newspaper so I intentionally did not put in much detail. The best way to test how that will look is simply reduce your original on a copy machine and you'll quickly see what to leave out and which lines need to be bolder so they will show up when reduced.

Hope that helps!
Best,
Dan Davis

Hi Bob,

I don't believe we've ever met before, my name is Matt Busch, and I'm an entertainment illustrator. I do work in everyth ng from Movies and Televi sion to Books and Magaz nes to Comics and Trad ing Cards.

And I've been using your products every day for the last several years. I love them! In particular, I love the 3 ply Bristol boards. It's ten times better than the crap the companies send, which I never use. The thickness is just right so when I do my painted work, the paper doesn't buckle.

Funny story. In the movie advertising indus try, poster comps are done at 11 X 17, because it's scaled perfect to the final size. For years, artists at all the studios had been using typing or tracing paper only because it's what's available in that size. So artists and studios alike are always im pressed with the comic book Bristol boards I turn in (I use the back side).

So anyway, while I can't single handedly take credit for it, I'm noticing that many of the other artists and ad studios in Hollywood are now using your boards instead! You're sweeping tinsel town! Hahal've also recently purchased some of your 11 X 17 art portfolios. You have no idea how long I'd been searching for that specific size, even stores that endorse me couldn't find them!

So, I just wanted to thank you for the great stuff.

Sincerely,
Matt Busch
www.MattBusch.com

Hi Matt,

Thanks for the information. I tried to get to your booth at the recent Chicago con to say hi but the crowds keep pushing me back.

Your work is great. I been following it over the past year. I've really enjoy the Star Wars work you've produce.

Let your Hollywood friends know that we are shopping around the rights to Sketch the Movie and the Behind the Scene story of Blue Line Pro. They're sure to be blockbusters.
B.

Hi there, Matt!

We appreciate the feedback on our board, a product we're proud of here at Blue Line – glad to hear it meets to your exacting standards, as you turn out all those cool Busch illustrations. Hollywood's known to be a tough town on talent, we're pleased to hear that you're cruising along Rodeo and doing well. Sketch readers should jump over to Matt's website and check out his cool stuff, not to mention watching out for his name as the credits roll!
F

Hey Guys -

Thanks for being the publication dedicated to comic artists, filling in all the little trade informa tion gaps along the way to "comic stardom." You guys have been an invaluable source to answering questions from "what are those little X's for?", "pro tecting your material" to "how da heck do I use Photoshop to color?"

But I have a question that I believe is a concern to everyone. A very important question that quite honestly I don't hear as much as one would think: Money! What is the business of comics? How much should we ask for? How should we negotiate? What kinds of deals are made? Okay, it's a bunch of ques tions, but I think you know where I'm coming from.

Now, let's say in some fantasy universe, we've hit the jackpot. Indie publisher, Whateverthename Comics got your proposal for your new comic idea, " Superpowered Money Making Mutant Mice" and they want to give you your big break to publish your comic in a monthly series. Now, how does one negotiate this? Is this a licensing thing that is ne

---

gotiated where they pay to have exclusive publish ing rights under their name? If so, how much is the "industry standard"? Do we split the sale of every comic sold? If so, how much?

Hey, no one ever thought this business would make you a millionaire (Unless your name is McFarlane or Lee), but we would like to make some money while doing this labor of love.

Please keep up the good work. Sketch has been a great inspiration to more people than you know. Thanks

Best regards,
Kinnis5090@aol.com

Hey Kinnis,

Actually, that's a great idea for an article. There are a lot of unanswered questions there that most Sketch readers would want to know. There are so many factors involved with the issue of comics and money that it could have its own column, perhaps even a full issue. We'll see what we can turn up for you.
M2

Greetings Blueline,

First off I'd like to give you guys a big batch of Kudos for all your work on Sketch. It has far ex ceeded my expectations. As a creator struggling to perfect my craft your magazine has been a treasure trove! Especially on the business side of things. Which leads quite well into my question. Many companies ask that you only send in photocopies of your originals. I was wondering if I should send the copies at the original's size? Or, should I reduce them down to letter size for convenience? Most of my work is done on 11"X17" art board (Yes, BlueLine's Comic Book Pages of course.)

Keep up the good work.
-Travis the Mustard Dragon

Hey Travis,

Send your submission at letter size unless the company specifically states otherwise. This is go ing to be the size of your work if it is printed so let them see how its looks. Whatever you do, never send the originals for a submission. If they're interested, they can contact you to get the originals. Chances are, you'll never see them again if you blindly send them.
M2

CONTEST ALERT!

Anyone sending a cool illustrated envelope will see their work appear here and may win a pack of Blue Line Pro's Premiere 300 series Comic Book Art Boards.
One winner per issue.

eComics Creation for
Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader

by KLAUS

You may be wondering why I was asked to do this Acrobat how-to for your e-comic. I wondered the same thing, and came to this conclusion: This just shows that ANYONE can publish his or her comic on the Internet. Or, just maybe, it could be because I've been able to produce *SUPER GRAPE* as a relatively clean e-comic with a low file size, and have made it available on the web in one form or another. This is because of the long, arduous road of trial-and-error. Hopefully, following the example of how I prepared the first issue of our e-comic for Acrobat, you can be saved the trial-and-error part. That just leaves sitting back while the dollars roll in (still waiting...).

Large Panels

1.) Everything started with scanning. I scanned the 10"x15" image area in two halves, then saved them as black-and-white drawing files at 300dpi. I wanted to start out with the clearest, most crisp, and highest res images I could. I could work down from there. Plus, *SUPER GRAPE* has large panels—fewer per page, but much more computer and Acrobat Reader-friendly.

2.) I opened my scanned page halves in Adobe Photoshop LE. I purchased the Photoshop Limited Edition because it was vastly cheaper than its full-version counterpart, yet could be upgraded at the same price as the full version. Also, I found that it had every function I would need to prep, alter, and format my pages for Acrobat conversion, as well as handle my digital color work, my photo retouching, and any other freelance illustration work that might come along. It paid for itself in no time.

After converting to grayscale, splicing together, then flattening my pages, I checked for imperfections. Use of the erase tool, the lasso tools, and the **dust and scratches** filter (drop menu **filter>noise>dust and scratches**) handled this easily. My hand lettering has been widely panned as an affront to society as a whole, so I nixed my letters and dropped in digital comic book lettering. I've read that you shouldn't letter in Photoshop, not just because it wasn't designed for lettering, but also because Photoshop uses bitmap type (jagged edges smoothed by anti-aliasing) instead of TrueType (smooth-edged vector graphics), like Adobe Illustrator. But, frankly, I was thinking of economy more than anything else. In the final product, the text retained the same quality as the illustration.
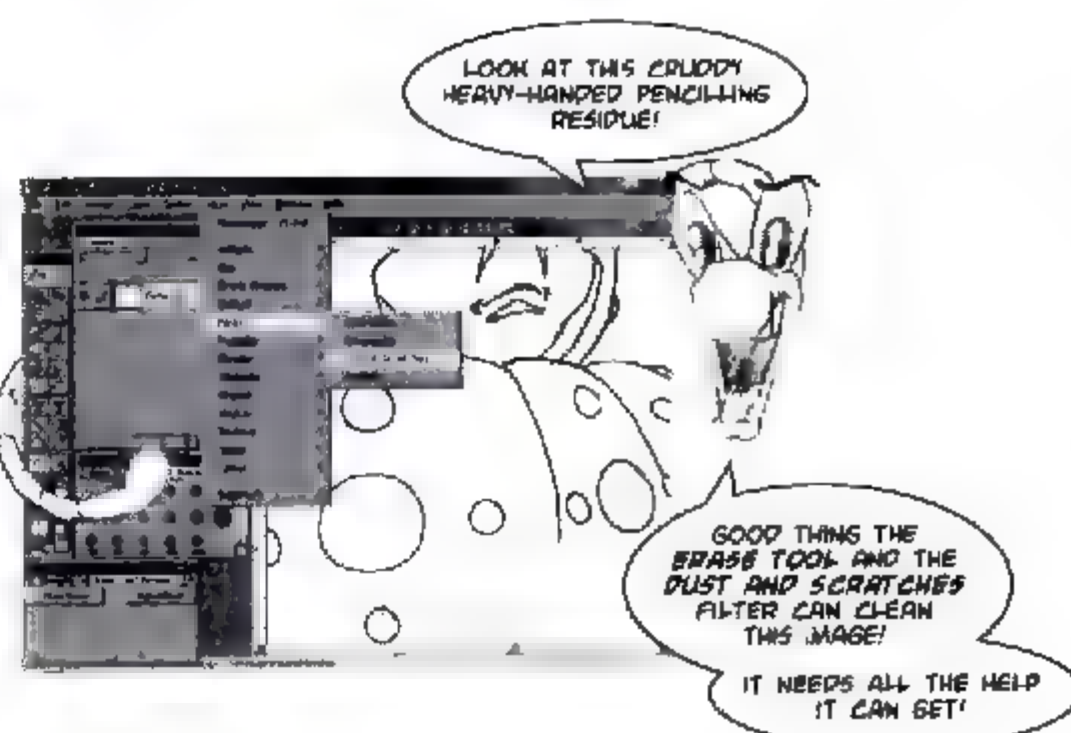
It was also at this point that I scanned in my last remaining sheets of Format zip tones, and cut-and-pasted them into the appropriate places on my pages. I also played with texture filters to create a more "personaized" set of tones. (See Tone Tips)
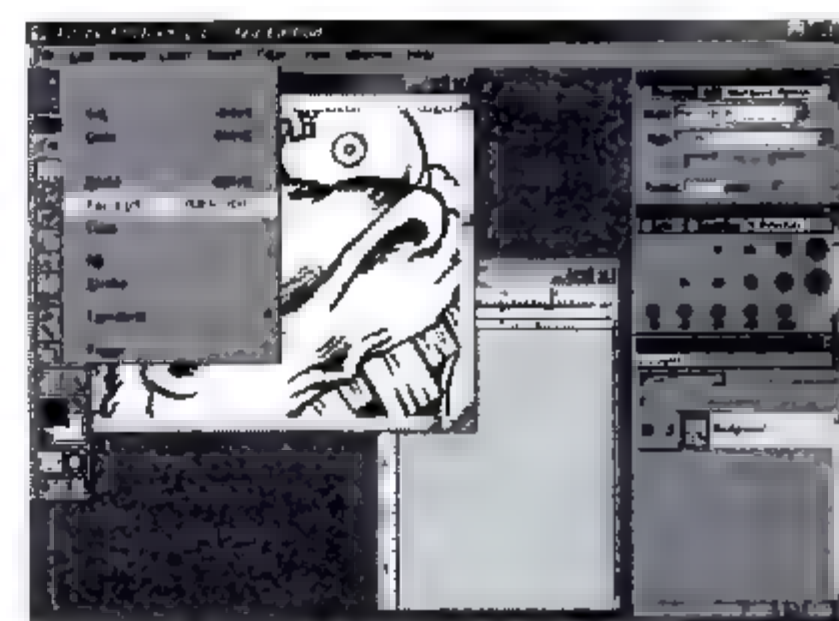
Before tones

After tones

KLAUS IS SUCH A CHEAPSKATE. HE MADE HIS OWN ZIP TONES

*HE JUST OPENED A BLANK FILE AND PLAYED WITH THE GRAIN AND TEXTURE FILTERS.*
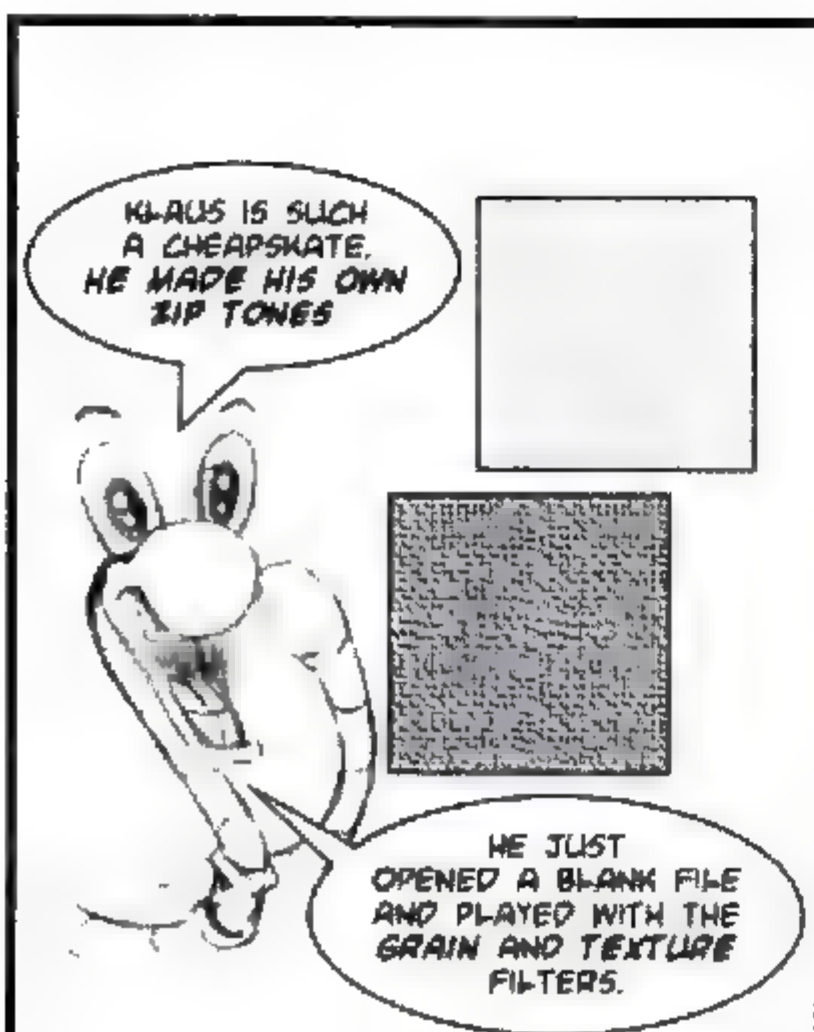
Tone Tip
A step by step on how to make zip tones in PhotoShop

1. Open up a blank document in Photoshop (Full or LE)

2. Select **Filter:Texture:Grain** though the menu bar.

3. From here you have the option of adjusting the intensity and contrast as well as changing the grain type. The higher the intensity, the denser the tones will become. The higher the contrast, the lighter they will appear. Feel free to experiment. You have a variety of grain types to choose from which can change the tone's appearance drastically. Anything from regular to speckle. Regular, soft, sprinkled, and stripped are grain types that are more commonly associated with comics.

4. Once you found a tone you like, click **OK**.

5. Blank document is filled with new tone.

6. **Save** document for later use.

Repeat and adjust to increase your library of tones.

3.) When the pages were finished and my cover colored, and the whole mess reduced to a user-friendly 6"x9" image size, I reached another decision point. The e-"publishing house" I was using at the time determined the price for *SUPER GRAPE* on a file size scale. My co-creator, FIGG, and I realized that since the e-comics thing was a gamble at best, we needed to keep the price per issue as low as possible That meant I had to find a way to format our first 28-page, color cover, black-and-white interior book to sell for the low, low price of $2.00 a "copy." That meant it had to be below five megabytes in size.

What follows is the sometimes grueling, other times hair-tearing process of file formatting I went through. My objective: keep my high 300dpi res images while drastically reducing the file size of each page. I did this by first converting my grayscale image back to bitmap (for the cover, I converting RBG to Indexed Color) and saving a copy of it as a TIFF (Tagged Image File Format), taking advantage of the LWZ compression option. This dropped my one-megabyte pages to roughly 200 *kilobytes*. Great, but not low enough to stay under five meg for the final book. And I still needed to convert them to PDF (Postscript Document Files, the format for Acrobat) for final assembly.
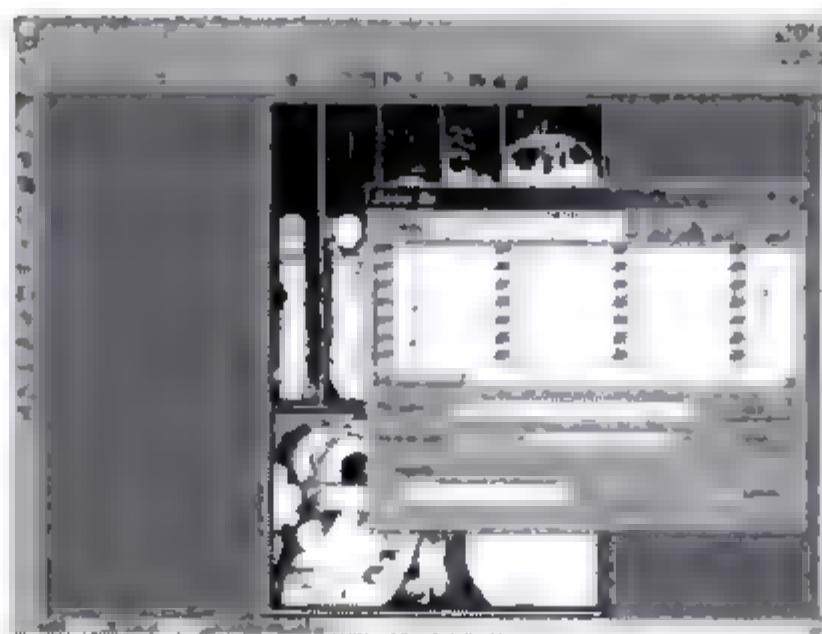
Saving Files

To accomplish this, I opened Acrobat (not to be confused with Acrobat Reader, which is merely the e-book viewing software) and opened each TIFF copy individually. Acrobat automatically converted them to PDF when opened, so I saved a copy of each page there. This dropped the file size per page again, without losing the resolution I wanted. It was now time to put the book together in Acrobat.

4.) I opened my final PDF version of my cover in Acrobat, then using the drop menu **document>insert pages**, inserted the pages in order one at a time (remembering to save every two pages in case I made a mistake). When the book was complete, I did a final check by "over-viewing" it, that is, zooming the pages way out and viewing it as continuous facing
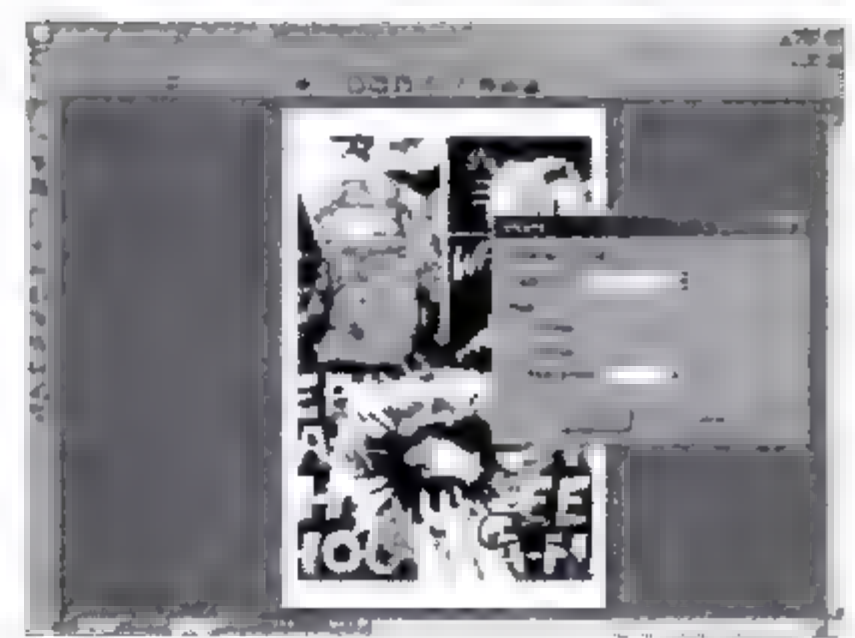

Inserting Pages in Acrobat

pages (drop menu **view>continuous-facing**). Perfection. My final check complete, I saved the file and renamed it with the book's title and "issue" number.

Final eComic

Though Acrobat offers password security features at save time, I didn't secure the file, because that was handled "in-house" with the e publisher. I have learned that it is important to carefully read your publishing agreement, but specifically the COPYRIGHT and SECURITY sections. This way, you know what you're getting yourself into.

HOO-BOY! I'M E-PUBLISHED!
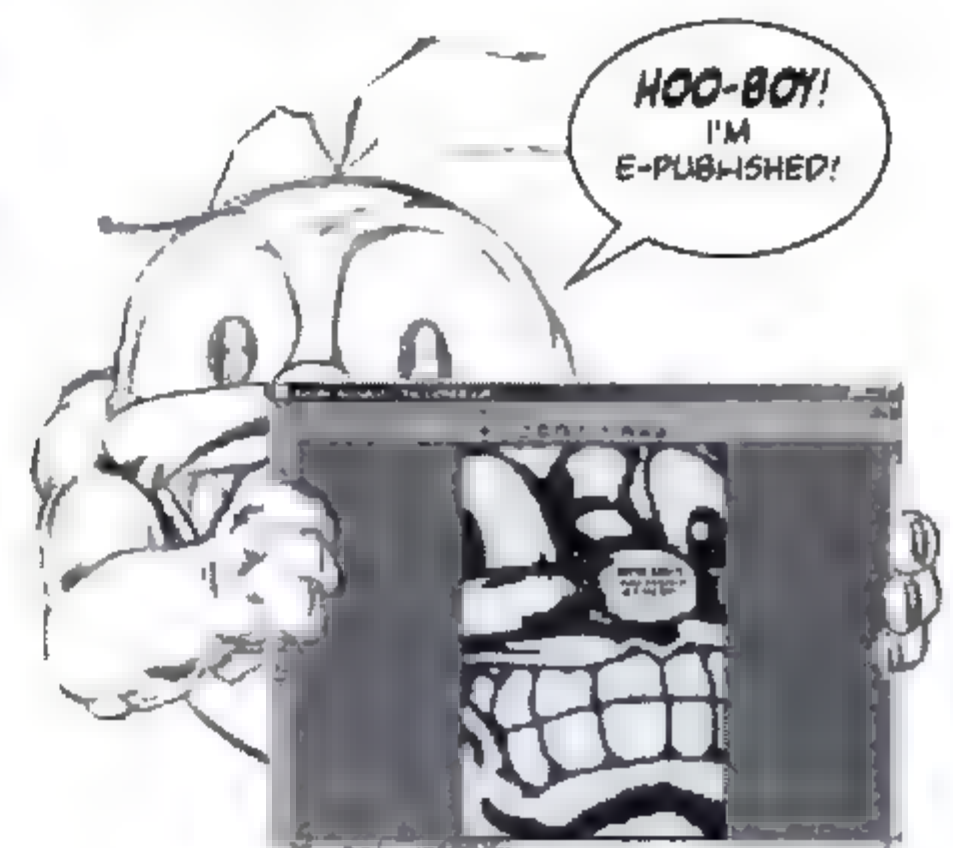
That's it. It took me a month to perfect this method. With this guide, hopefully you'll be able to accomplish all this in a few evenings.

And if any of you find a better way to do it, LET ME KNOW FIRST.

Summary:

1.) Scan pages at 300dpi.

2.) Splice and correct mistakes in Photoshop. Add lettering, tones, etc.

3.) Convert from grayscale to bitmap (RBG to Indexed Color) and save as TIFF.

4.) Open TIFF version of page in Acrobat, save as PDF.

5.) Open final PDF version of cover, insert pages in sequence, saving frequently. Check Save final book.

6.) Go take a walk.

AND NOW, A FEW THOUGHTS....

A major advantage of Acrobat is that it allows you to input the highest-quality images you can produce, in rich, vibrant color. But you'll pay for it. And so will your readers. Just remember: keeping the file size down is key to the downloading process. Most of us are not using high-speed Internet access. Most of us won't spend six, four, or even two hours downloading your e-book. And that means few will see your virtual *objet d'art*.

Or, some might hack it and pirate it. Current online security is arcane, to say the least. If hackers can break into the Pentagon's mainframe, they can pilfer your comic. Again, understand what you're getting into.

One of the most impacting factors in the production of your e-comic is with whom you choose to publish. There are now many online publishers—even Amazon.com, Barnes&Noble.com, and even some comic book resource sites are dabbling in it—and I've found they vary widely in respect to fees, royalties,

etc. It's apparent we're all feeling our way through this new medium. Take the time to check around.

Remember that the computer is just a *tool*, and the Internet just another *venue* for your work, and any art should not begin and end with either. The real meat and meaning of the work starts with pencils and ink on paper, and words on a page. It's the *content* that will carry the *medium* of e-comics, not vice versa.

In the spirit of this diversification philosophy, we published *SUPER GRAPE* with 1stBooks Library. It's just one of the online houses that could offer our work in e-book format (for those exploring the new medium) and in a traditional trade paperback format (for those who still like to hold something in their hands).

E-comics probably won't make any of us rich, but it's a literal playground for public experimentation—stylistically and content-wise. Since we're making *virtual* books, the pages don't have to be a uniform size or shape (unless you choose to publish for print as well, that is). We are not constrained by a certain number of pages. And—most importantly to me, as an independent creator—we don't have to work within specific genres or storytelling formats to please the "higher-ups". At this new frontier of e-publishing our work can progress outside of the established system more efficiently, but fully within the public eye. We can shoot this mass experiment straight from the lab to the end user.

The e-publishing future is so uncertain that it may be foolish to speculate too much on it now. But my one hope is that, via the Internet, we may have the advantage of finding masters of the form that may have remained hidden otherwise. We could (and some are actively working toward this goal right now) realistically create a New Literature, that is more at home in your local bookstore than on the wall of a specialty shop.

In the past, only a handful of creators have broken the mold, taken the art form to the next level. With the aid of e-publishing and the Internet, we could create a *whole movement*, made up of coalitions and collectives of artists, working independently of each other, yet in sync toward this goal of wider acceptance.

Finally, a word of caution: Advances in the technology of the World Wide Web will widen our palettes, but, like all things large and potentially intrusive, we should retain a healthy fear and skepticism. In other words, don't buy into the hype—be aware of the real possibilities (and dangers). Stay educated about your newly adopted medium.

Then, shut the computer off. Play chess. Walk your dog. Call your mom. Get back to the drawing board or your notebook. Go to sleep.
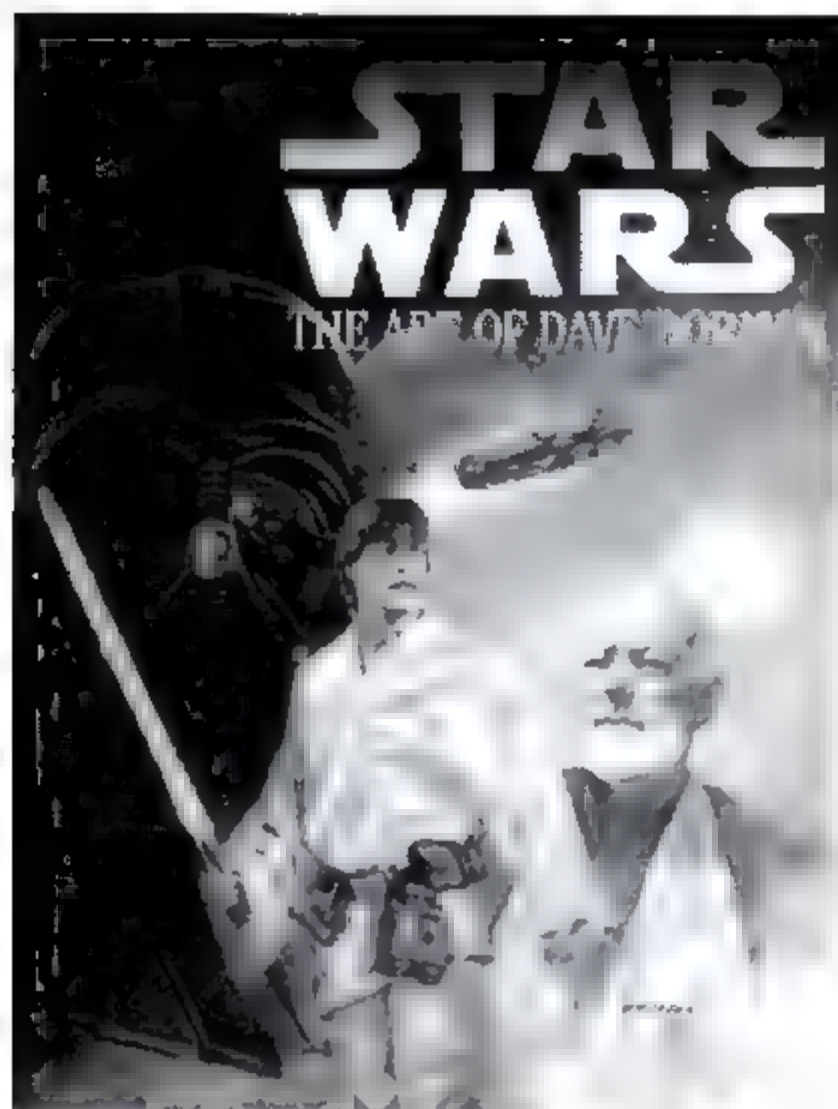
Wake and repeat.

KLAUS is the author and co-illustrator of SUPER GRAPE: Going Nowhere in a Big Way. He can be contacted via his web site: www.klausandfigg.com.

STAR WARS: THE ART OF DAVE DORMAN

by Dave Dorman
edited by Stephen D. Smith
& Laurene Haines
$23.50 / Softcover $35.50 / Hardcover

At first glance you might assume that this book is just yet another collection of work from a particular artist, but upon closer inspection you realize there is a great amount of informative material. Mr. Dorman provides a review of each piece, revealing the way he, the artist, looks at his own work. Understanding how others accomplish their artistry can greatly improve how another approaches their own work.

Dorman narrates throughout the entire book, giving you a personal tour of his career and artwork. After an introduction by the novelist Kevin J. Anderson, Dave informs the reader of the origin of his love of Star Wars, and the influence it had on him. As the first three Star Wars movies played out so did Dorman's art, as he refined his skills with illustration and painting inspired by the movies. Dorman displays some of his earlier work, giving you an interesting view of where he began and to where he is now. Dorman tells the reader of his opportunity to paint comic covers for Dark Horse, eventually leading him to land the Star Wars work. With the rise of Star Wars' popularity in the early 90's, Dave speaks about his work and how it took him to the top of the industry, as well as the ever

increasing demand for his material beyond comics that includes paperbacks, and CDs

The book leads on to a collection of his trademark movie-poster like comic book cover paintings and then to his paperback, magazine, and other print work. With nearly 50 pieces of artwork, each broken down with concept sketches and alternatives that are accompanied by intriguing and informative narration explaining the piece and Dave's intentions, you'll be fascinated with Dorman's incredible skills.

The last section of the book is a walk-through of Dave's technique, as he shows step-by- step the creation of the book's cover, detailing the material he uses and the progressive steps of the piece, from the background to the forefront subjects. This part is like a cherry on top of your favorite dessert, a wonderful addition that perfectly wraps up an already great book.

If you're already a Dorman fan, a Star Wars fan, or any fan of great, eye-catching illustration, then Star Wars The Art of Dave Dorman is one book you definitely want to check out.
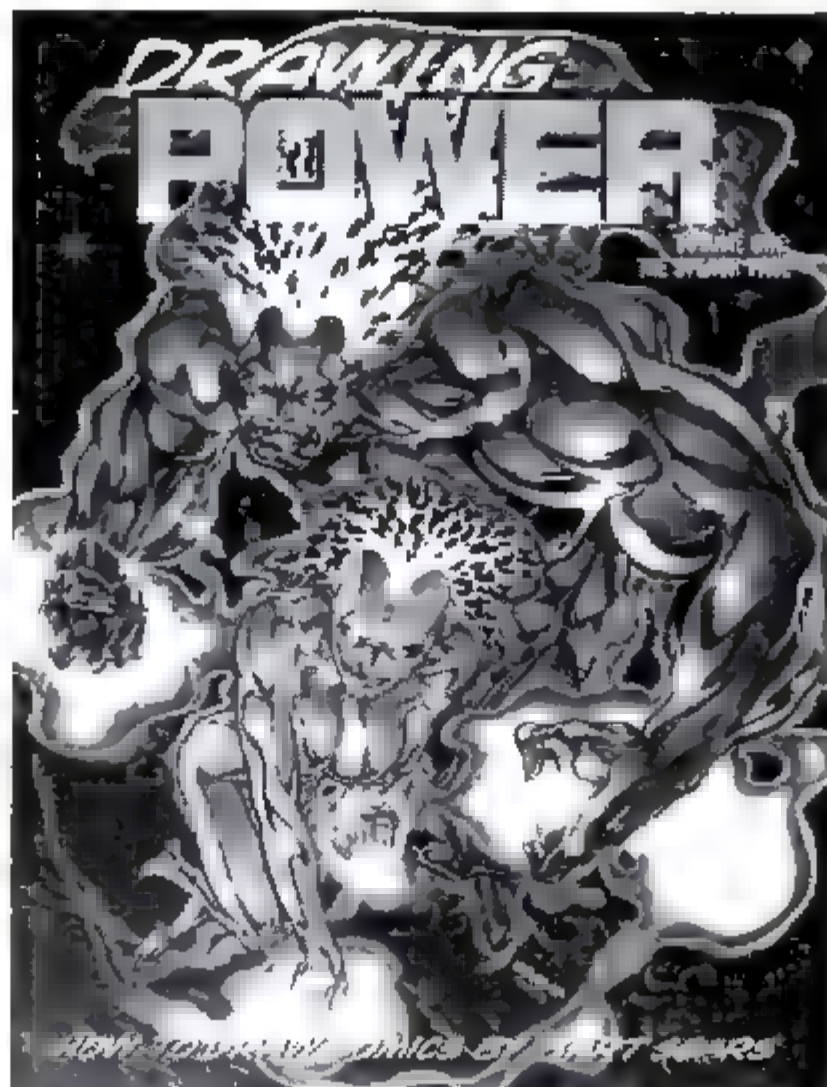
DRAWING POWER VOLUME ONE

by Bart Sears
Published by SQP
$9 95 Soft Cover 64pg.

There are many aspects to drawing comics. One has to be able to orchestrate all the many elements of composition, light and shadow, and figure work in order to move the eye from panel to panel and page to page, as well as become a master of perspective and proportion For many, learning these building blocks can't compare to the fun and excitement of drawing the splash page, but you should

learn from one of the best in order to do so. In his first volume of Drawing Power, Bart Sears – well known for his great work for almost every comic company including DC (Justice League of America), Marvel (Blade), Penthouse comics, SQP, Image, and of course, CrossGen (The First) – will put you on the proper path to success with his personal take on splash pages and the awesome power behind them. As everyone knows, the splash page does much to heighten the action and drama of a book, and Bart's oft-imitated style is particularly effective on this comic book mainstay.

You may be thinking to yourself the same questions that came to my mind: " Splash pages? You mean an entire book in on splash pages? How much do you need to know?" Well apparently, with just a quick flip though this book, you need to know a lot. This is more than your average run-of-the-mill progressive. Bart Sears takes the time to walk you carefully though the creation of a single splash page, breaking down everything you need to know and not missing a single step From breaking down a script into roughs to inking in the final blacks, he explains all the necessary principles and then some. Your approach to your big eye candy page should greatly benefit from Drawing Power, as Sears uses his clean and straight forward technique to great effect in explaining things like perspective, proportion, shapes, body types, etc , then combining them for maximum splash impact.

I'm not saying that you can become a "master of the splash" by just reading this book. Oh no, that takes practice, practice, practice. But your talent and effort will certainly be enhanced with the knowledge Bart's years of professional and popular panel work can bring Drawing Power will certainly serve as a valuable resource in helping you become a master of the trade yourself. I personally found Bart's book refreshingly different than some of the other how-to's you might be familiar with, providing a very detailed yet clean point of view as opposed to some of the seemingly standardized or gimmicky, glitzy, "taste of the month" – instructionals on the market.

At $9.95, Drawing Power Volume One: The Splash Page is an excellent bang- for-your-buck book. It will give you plenty to work with while you're being inspired by The First. Let's hope Bart has some time to get to Volume Two.

Printing Comics
Finding What You Can Afford...
and Then What You Want.

by Anthony Tragans

As a creator, when examining the rack of new comics at your local shop you undoubtedly notice the wide range of colors and quality of materials books are produced with. Being the aspiring self-publisher that you are, you might wonder why every comic doesn't come with a card stock cover with a flashy hologram - surely this would be better then a dull enamel cover? Why black and white? Who wants black and white when you can have 32 pages of full-blown color? "When I make my comic, it's going to be top of the line," you might tell yourself.

Well, welcome to the real world, with real things and real people who need real money for real full color shiny card stock covers with dazzling holograms. Chances are that when you first try to start your own comic, you won't be able to afford all the glints and glamour associated with the million dollar big guys. Before you go charging off to fight the good comic book production fight you need to know a few things; particularly what you can afford... and then what you want.

Despite how I might have come across at the beginning, there is definitely no shame in a black and white book. Hopefully, what will enable you and your book to make the long run is the quality of your content, not the package alone. A flashy, expensive cover might catch a reader's attention, but this glitzy shroud over their eyes will be easily seen though by a quick read. A good story and quality artwork in black and white is ten times better than a full color book with no story

and awful, or even good, artwork, no matter how high its production values. Look at Jeff Smith's Bone or Dave Sim's Cerebus. They have a huge following due to the intricate tales they tell, not by trying to blow away the reader with the latest digital coloring phenomena

Assuming you already have your story drawn out, inked, and lettered, you'll be thinking about getting it self-published. A huge part of publishing is the printing and its cost. You'll want to be educated, informed, and budget conscious as you begin to make your printing choices and decisions.

Probably the first thing you want to decide on is whether to go with black and white or full color throughout your book. Compared to the cost of b&w printing, printing full color will generally run over twice that amount. Depending on the printing company and/or the sales associate you deal with (and how much of a break he's willing to give you on your estimate), this rate may vary either way. Even if you are saving money by coloring the book yourself (as opposed to hiring a professional colorist and incurring additional expense), choosing full color could be a hard bullet to bite.

The reason behind the significant price difference between b&w and color books lies within negative film. Negative film is what a printer uses to make his printing plate. With b&w, only one color is printed black - so only one negative and plate needs to be used. Color is separated for

printing into 4 different colors (magenta, cyan, yellow, and black), making for 4 negatives. This process is called color separation. If you're looking to save some money and supply your own negatives, then you might want to look into a pre-press company. These companies handle the creating of negatives and other pre-press operations. But in today's world of streamlined businesses these companies are a dying industry, and you should check with your printer first. Many times the printer will have additional charges for using film he didn't create, such as stripping them for his press. Stripping is the process of taking a negative and "stripping" them in a masking sheet that is then burned to make the plate. Most of the time, stripping charges are included with your estimate when you go directly through the printer to have the negatives done. The printer is going to get his money one way or another

As stated before, b&w interiors are a perfectly acceptable and time-proven way to produce great comics. Of all the books currently produced for this industry, over half of them are b&w. It's a decision you'll have to make as a self publisher, and it's one usually made based on your budget and what you can afford. However, it's a good idea to have color when it comes to your cover. When displayed on the rack with the other books, you don't want to come across as standard newsprint copy. Whatever you do, make sure you have it in your budget to have a colored cover. The first impression your cover makes may not entirely sell your book, but it

must make its "sales pitch" effectively and attractively to get people to pick your book up and check out its contents.

Deciding on the material your book will be printed on is the next step. The material for your book is responsible for the "feel" it will give the reader in their hands. This can be a major factor in the enjoyment of the book's read. Too flimsy, the book collapses on itself upon opening. Too rigid, you can't keep the page from flipping back after you have finished and turned it. You need to have a balance between accessibility and sturdiness. To achieve this, your cover should be of a heavier stock than that inside. This allows the cover to support the pages inside, much like slices of bread on a sandwich... toasted

In the comic book industry, this means a standard weight of 35lb book-paper for the content with a 35lb cover-paper for the cover (approximately a 70lb book paper). The weight of the paper is determined by how heavy 500 uncut sheets of that paper weighs. Uncut sheets usually are anywhere between 17x22 to 25x38, depending upon the type of paper. There are many types: book, cover, bristol, etc... A 70lb. cover is not equivalent to a 70lb book paper, more like a 130 lb book paper. Many of you have probably heard of the term "ply." Instead of just having a single board make up the paper thickness, several types use more then one to make up its thickness. The number of ply is how many boards make up the paper's thickness. For example, an 80lb cover is just as thick as a 2ply 40lb cover. Ply is usually associated with the thick art boards that comics are drawn on and not printed on. Nevertheless, it's a good thing to know Keep all this in mind and don't assume you know the thickness based on some preconceived notion. The language of paper can get confusing.

A card stock cover may be nice, but are they affordable for you? The difference between card stock and "regular paper" is that card stock is rigid and thick, not flimsy Basically, any paper that is 100lb or more is considered a card stock. And you'll want to use a bright white paper for the inside, especially when you're going with b&w. The more contrast you have, the better and more attractive your images will turn out. Of course there are other options that your printer will present to you, and you will have to weigh the benefits that come with them. Feel free to try something out of the standard formats and experiment but be careful. Don't put your investment in too much potential jeopardy.

It may be good to let the orders of your book be the main deciding factor for the quantity you decide to print, but there are still a few things to think about. The bulk of the printing cost is the setup and prep work, and not the actually material being printed. You may be getting a sweet deal per book if your print run is high, but you still have to pay for all of them and all the books you don't sell could potentially eat up your profits Sometimes there will be books that are misprinted or damaged that you'll need to replace. It's usually a sound idea to have more printed then you have ordered, and your initial sales should pay for the print run. This way whatever books you have left will already be paid for, and become all profit when you sell them though reorders or at conventions.

Now you may be asking, "But what is it really going to cost me? I want to know the real sum." Borrowing a line from a printing sales rep , "You can't buy printing by the pound." The amount of variables - from inks, papers, prep, amount of copies, etc - makes printing a job by job basis. The list could go on and on. Get several estimates from printing companies to compare prices. Don't be afraid to pit their prices against each other to get a better price. What's the worse they can say..."no"?

As those that have experienced it can tell you, self-publishing can be a tricky endeavor. Like any venture, it's good to get plenty of knowledge beforehand to help weigh your decisions. I'd like to thank Kathy Stadalman at Johnston Paper Co. for helping me unravel the mystery of paper jargon and Mike Meyer from Quebecor for confirming the unpredictability of printing.

Till next time...

A.T.
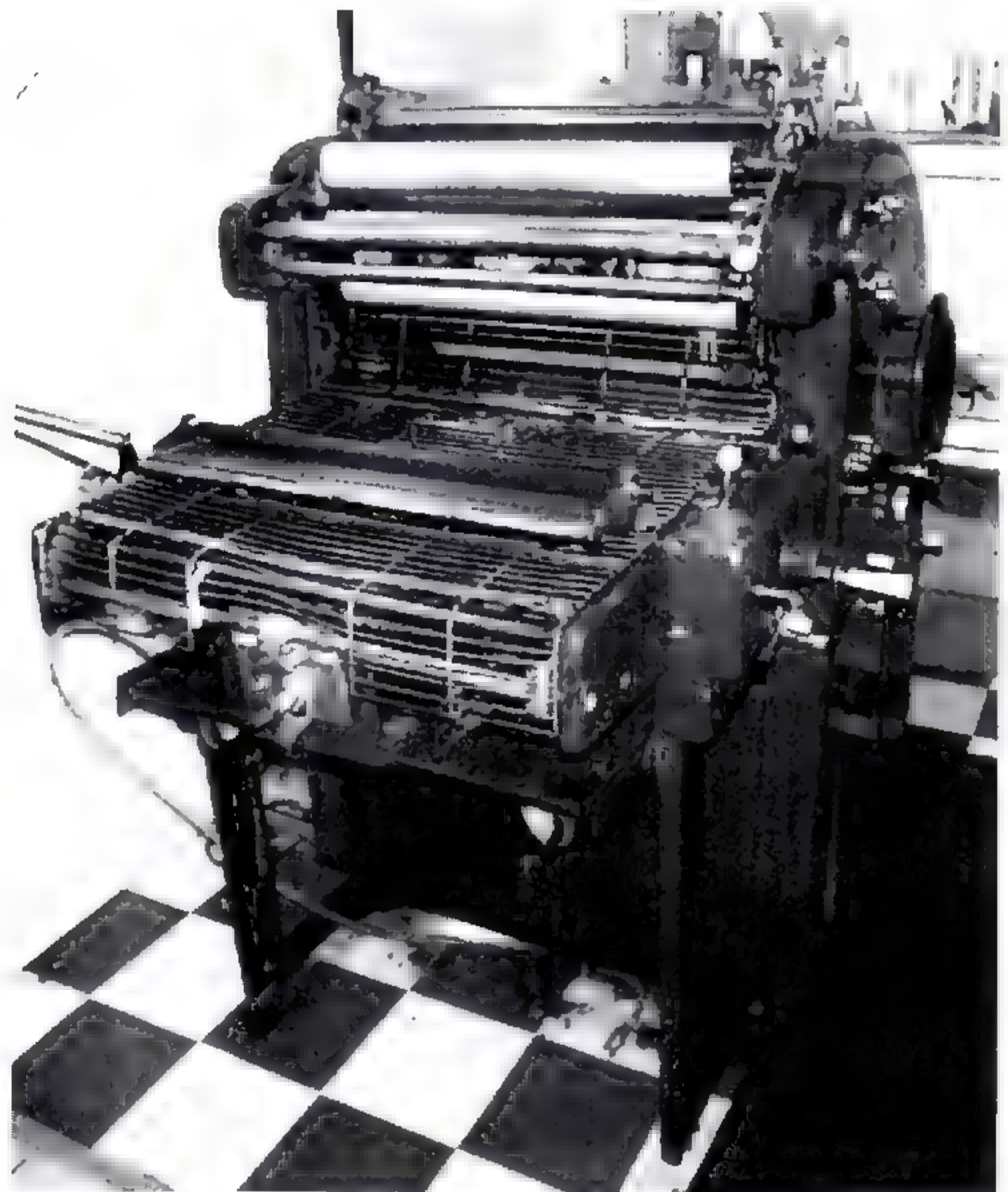
"BIO-TECHANISM" POSTER BREAKDOWN

Painting Techniques and Principles
by John Gravato

About Bio-Techanism:

A series of Manga inspired posters created for GF2 Media. Bio-Techanism is a world far into the future, in which biology and technology have evolved into a new form of life. These prints are the first in a range of products from the Bio Techanism label. Soon there will be resin models, various new posters, and a comic book series set to debut next year

'METAMORPHOSIS' POSTER

1) The first stage was to design an image that would depict a change or metamorphosis, more figurative then literal. I had been given an abstract concept of rebirth from the creative brains at GF2 Media. I wanted the idea simple: a sexy women angel/warrior changing from something cold and dead to something bold and beautiful (of course retaining the necessary cool weapons and lack of clothes!).

When the design was altered and the folks at GF2 agreed upon a final look, a basic pencil layout was made on A4 and then enlarged to A2. Working smaller enables you to overcome proportion problems that arise when you draw something large. This enlargement was then traced and refined onto board using an HB pencil. The lines were kept clean and light so as not to mark the paper.

2) The inking was done with Indian ink using my trusty old quill pens and sable brushes. I like to use various tools and materials to achieve texture when inking. Texture is an essential element of the work giving contrasts and movement; it makes for varied and interesting surfaces to paint on. Try using household materials (e.g.: sponges and cloth) to create patterns and textures.

3) Now comes one of the most important elements, the color. The entire image is coated with a watered down layer of cobalt blue. The image has lots of electric glowing elements, and blue plays off well against glowing white. Applying a base coat not only unifies the picture by ensuring that all the colors have a tinge of blue, but solidifies the composition. Too many colors run the risk of conflicting and so disrupting the viewer's eye.

4)   I try to complete the dark colors first. The lighter ones therefore don't get muddied and are left crisp and clear. The skin colors are created primarily from a combination of yellow (or a derivative), red (or a derivative), and white. I try and leave the skin for last so as not to accidentally mess over it. The skin needs to be as smooth as possible.

5)   This is the final painted image before it gets scanned and digitally enhanced. I kept the background totally empty so as to project the figure forward and hopefully emphasize the explosion of rock and color. The final stage of painting involves a lot of finishing and tightening of the finer details, which are very important to the overall image.

6)   The final image is set in the Bio-Techanism border with type added and digital enhancements. They include light rays emitting from the broken shell, holographic underwear and electric pulses on the wings (I vary between screen and overlay setting on the layer options). I try not to use too much digital retouching, as I still believe (maybe naively) that painting should be a mostly hands-on experience.

I hope this has been interesting and most importantly, inspiring to any budding painters out there...

If you have any questions relating to my work or questions in general, feel free to contact me at: Bio-techanism.co.uk

SECRETS
LIQUID COLORING
DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW!

by Aaron Hubrich

Liquid! Color has made it a habit of not letting out some of their techniques for computer coloring. Well, anyone with enough experience and patience can learn how to get their own coloring to look mighty close. In this article, I'm going to show you how to get that "wet" feel to all your characters and machinery.

One thing to keep in mind...these techniques require a lot of practice and time to learn, but once you know how, your stuff will look awesome. I'd also like to note that I have nothing against Liquid! Color. I actually love their stuff! I feel that you can learn from the best, and these guys are getting a boatload of work because they are the best in my opinion. They know color and depth, and also how to set "the mood" extremely well. The idea is: once you know how to do it their way, you'll begin to add your own flavor to it, and also really turn some heads. That's what it's all about, so lets go! If you have a better way, please let me know...I'm going to reveal to you the steps I have taken to achieve the look similar to Liquid! Color.
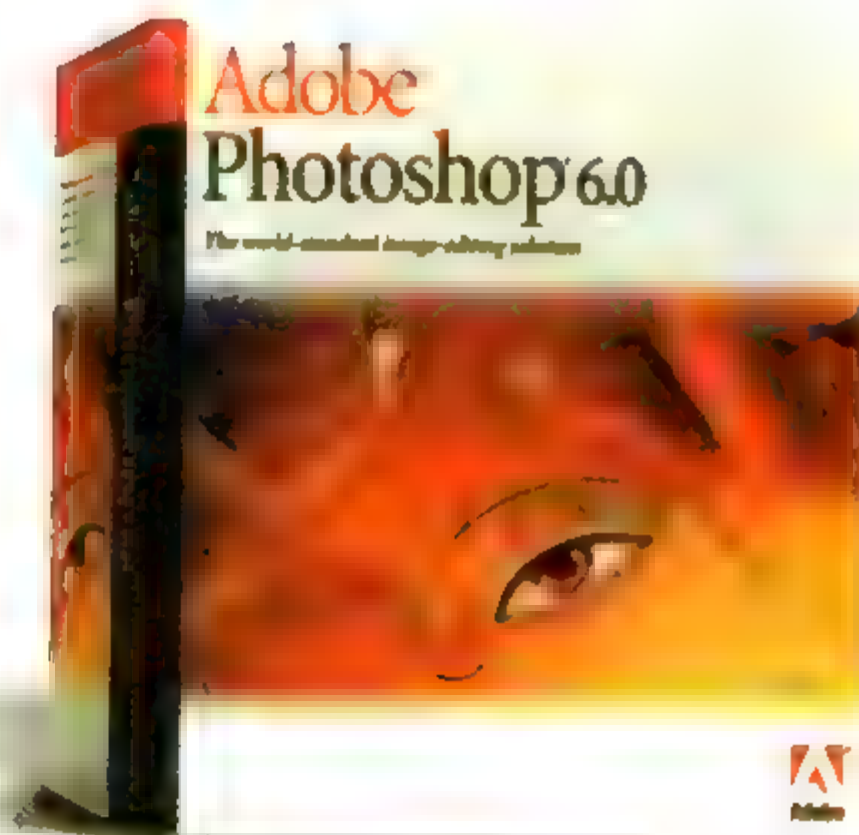
Tool #1 is Photoshop. I'd recommend using version 5.0 or later (6.0 is out now). This is an expensive program. I won't try to kid you. You can expect to invest at least a few hundred dollars on a recent version. I'd recommend getting an older version and spending your hard-earned cash on upgrades.


Tool #2 is a Wacom Tablet. This is a tool designed to work like a pen on paper for your computer. This isn't necessary when coloring, but for fatigue purposes, it works great. It takes a little getting used to, but I bet you'll never go back to a mouse! Don't get me wrong though...a mouse works just fine. Don't wait to try these techniques, just consider in the future investing about a hundred dollars for one of these tools. If you don't have a budget for a Wacom Tablet, invest in one of those Optical versions of a mouse ($30-$40). That's the next best thing. Keep in mind, you may be coloring for several hours at a time...fatigue is a factor when coloring!

Tool #3 is a decent computer. Really, any "Windows" machine with a 266 mhz processor and a minimum of 128 mb of ram is fast enough, but when time is money, I'd use the fastest machine I can get my hands on. It'll pay for itself over time. If you have the budget, I'd go for a G4 dual processor Mac with 256 mb (or more!) of ram...it flies in Photoshop! The idea is to get your butt in front of a computer. Don't be suckered into the whole Mac vs. PC debate...it just wastes time...time that can be spent coloring!

Now that you have the goodies to work with, let's get to work. These are techniques designed for someone who has a decent amount of experience with Photoshop. If you want some great advice on how to get your work into your computer and to be able to set your work up for coloring, refer to previous issues of Sketch magazine.
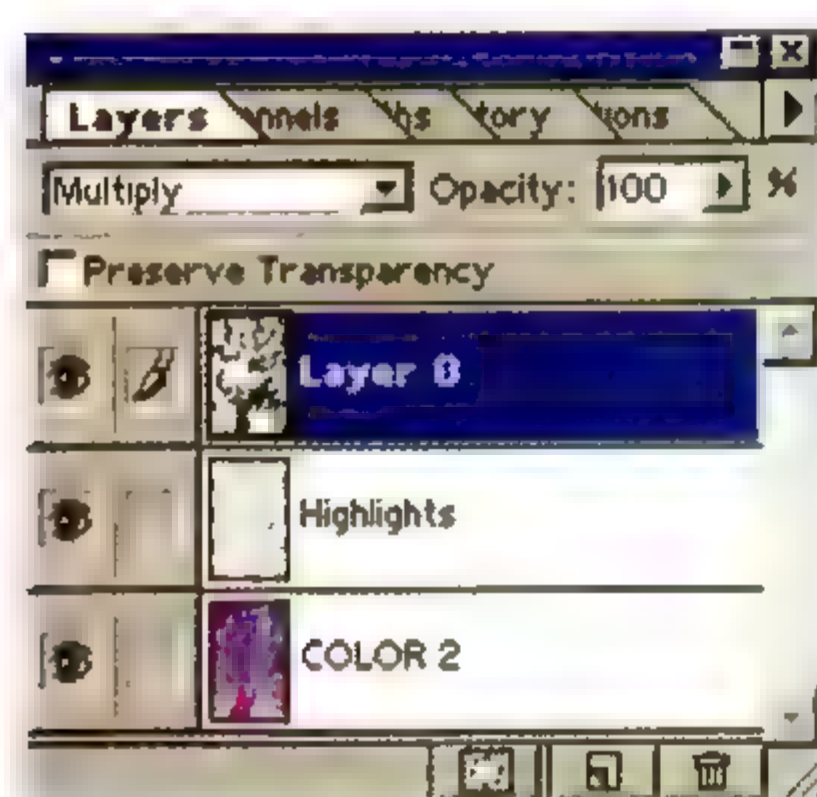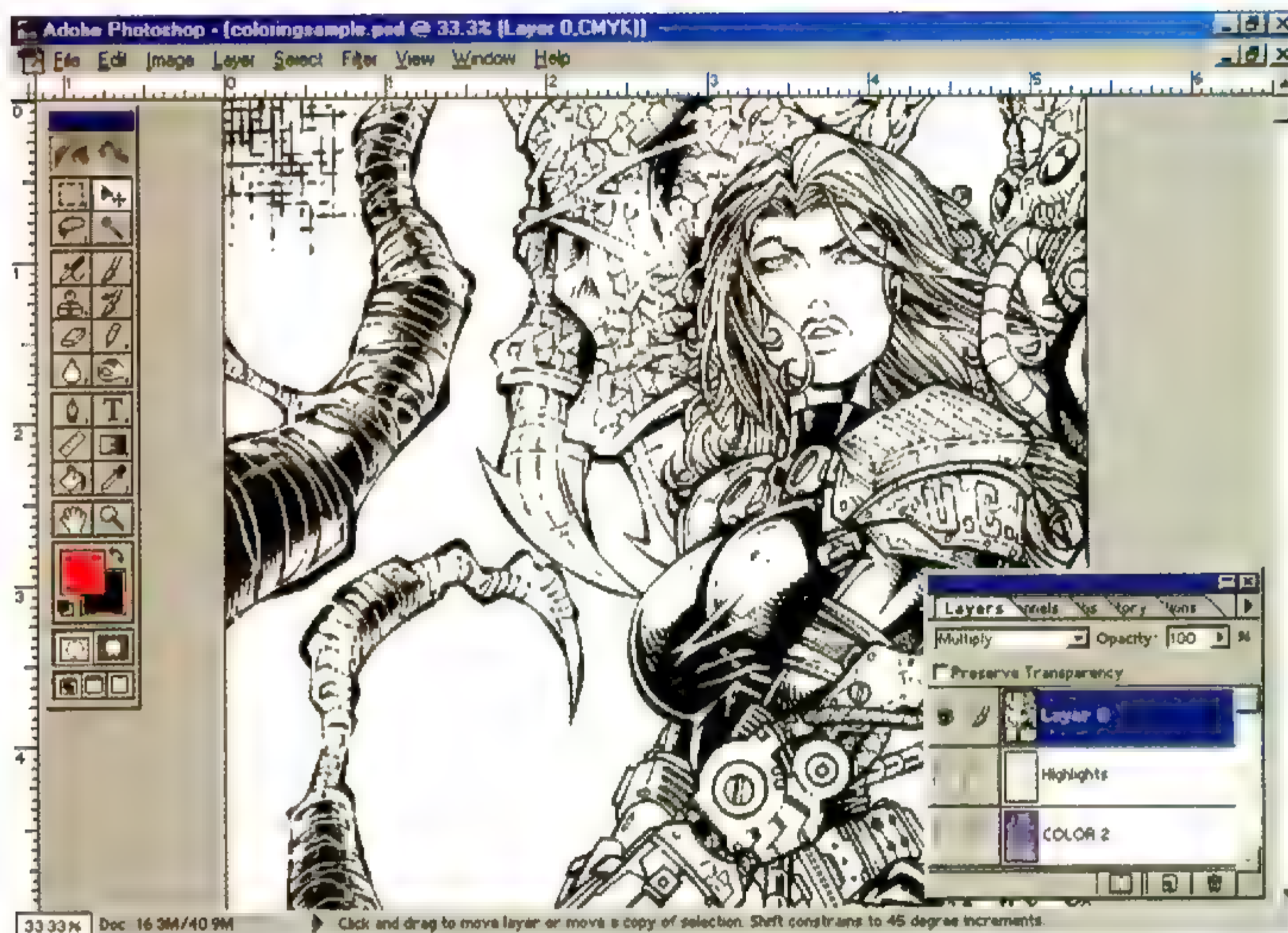
Let's make sure we have enough layers to work with. I'd recommend at least 3. A "line art" layer, a "base color" layer, and a "highlight" layer. You may need to have several more "highlight" layers, depending on the look you're going for.

Make sure your "line art" layer is of decent quality. I usually do covers at full size (11x17), at 300 dpi. It's a big file to work with, but when it goes to print, it looks great. Plus, at this size it allows you to do nice promo pieces - like posters - without losing resolution. You may want to consider working on interior pages "at size", meaning the final size of the comic. It saves that precious space reserved for important things like MP3 files, plus your ram won't be sucked up so much!
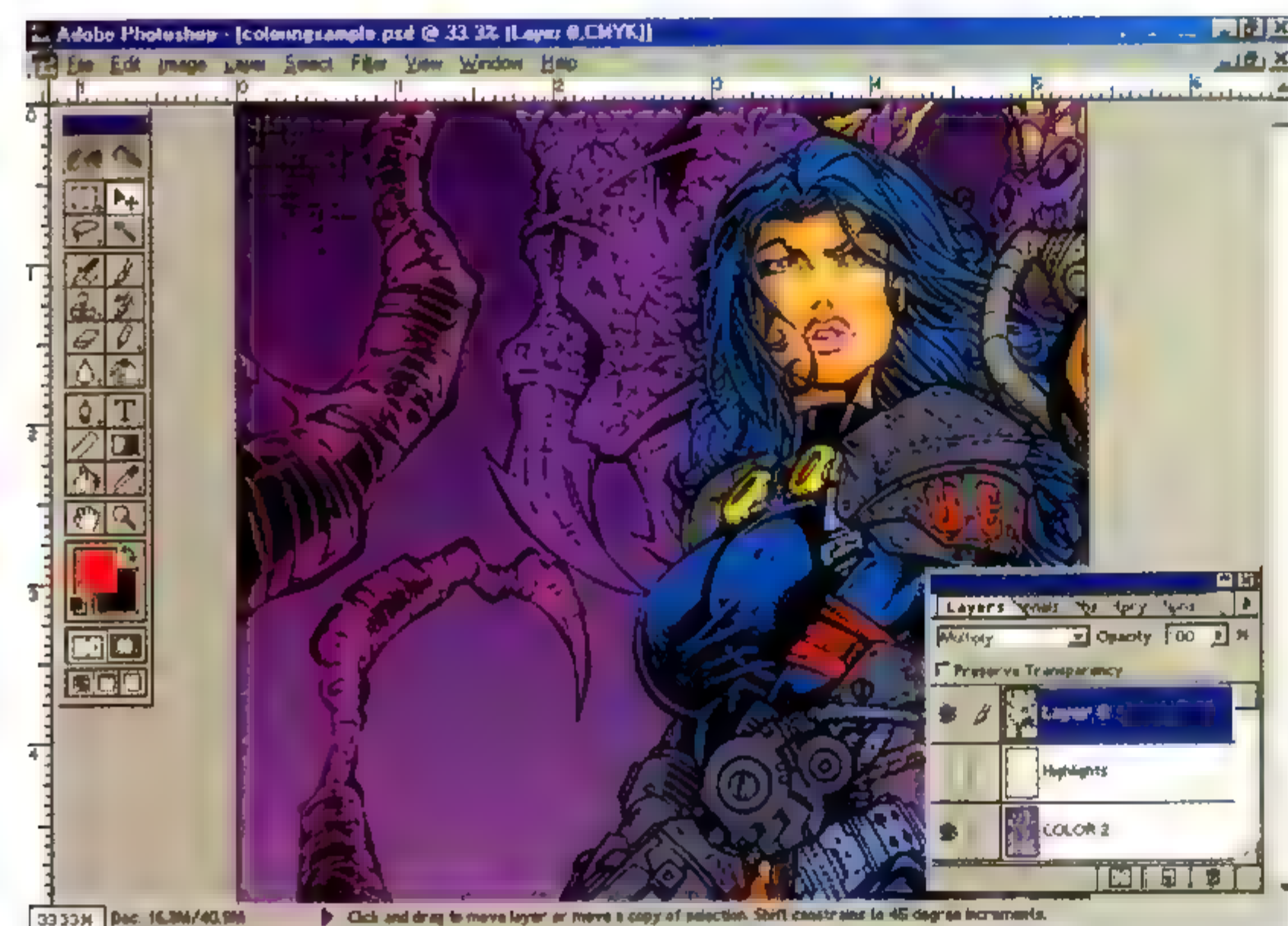

On your "base color" layer, I'd recommend doing your "typical" coloring techniques like tone balance and airbrush-like effects. This is where you can establish your "light source"; if it's night or day, or if it demands a mood. Some colorists do the effects on a separate layer. That's O.K. too! There are no rules! When you finish your base tones, it should almost feel like a finished piece…but something's missing. Hmmm. What could it be…?
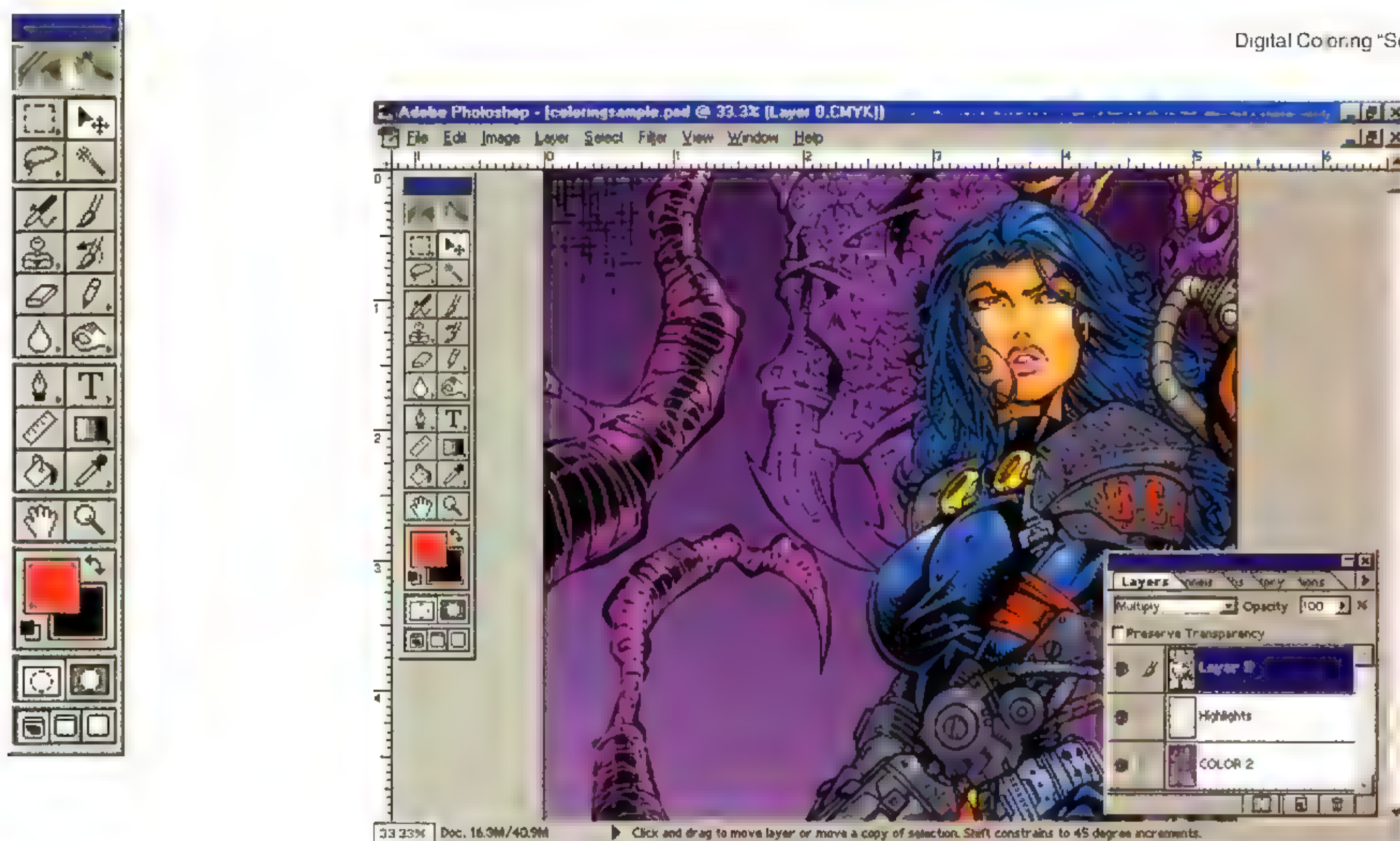
Now go out into your comic collection and grab yourself a book colored by the Liquid! Coloring staff. Imagine their stuff without those highlights. I'll bet you it looks kind of like your piece you just finished. Where these guys excel is in the highlighting. They do a great job of getting the "mood lighting" down. An example would be using an entire page with nothing but variations of blue to give a night scene a bunch of color. It's not difficult, or even time consuming, to do this kind of technique. Where the page stands out is in the highlights…
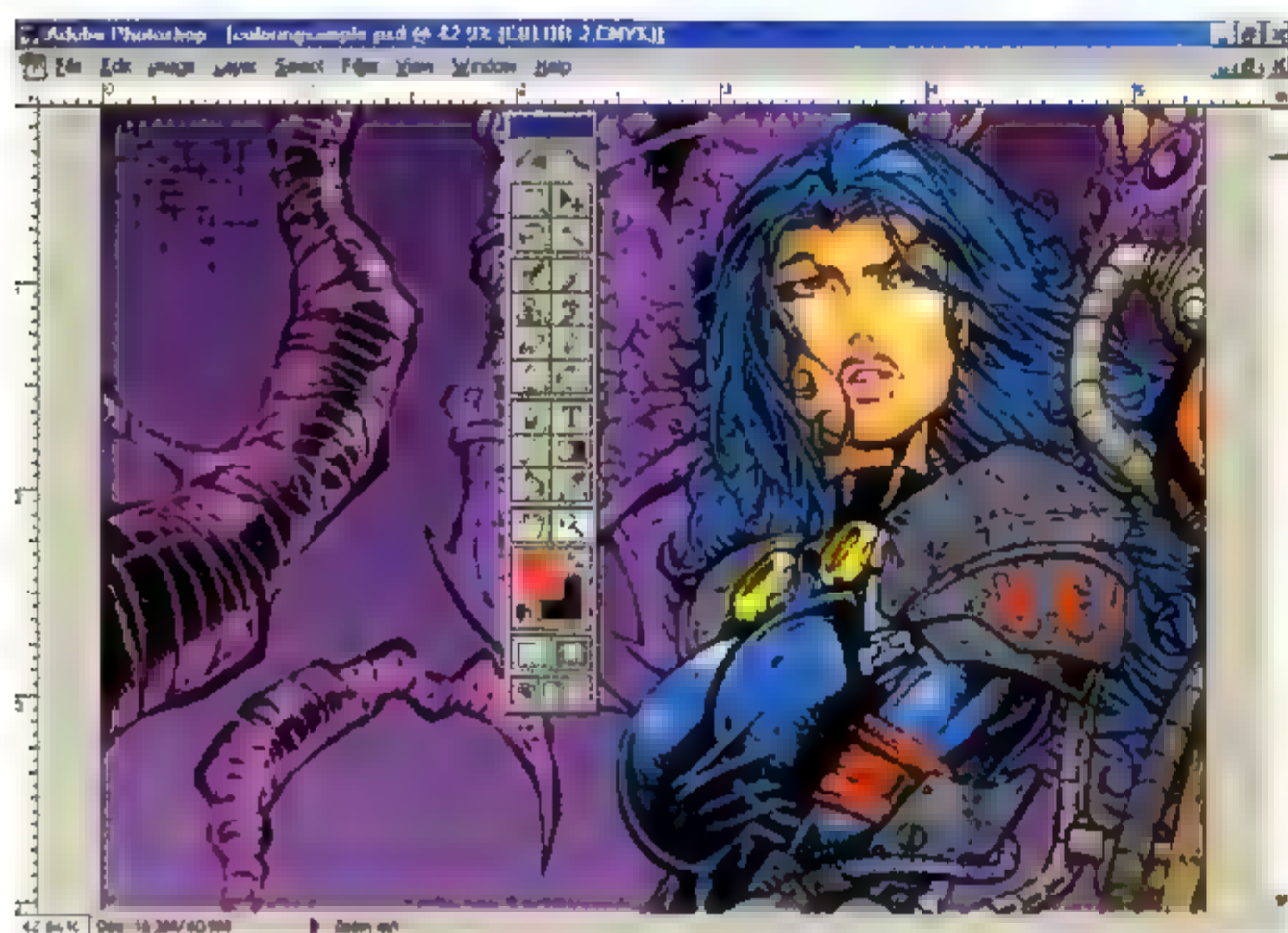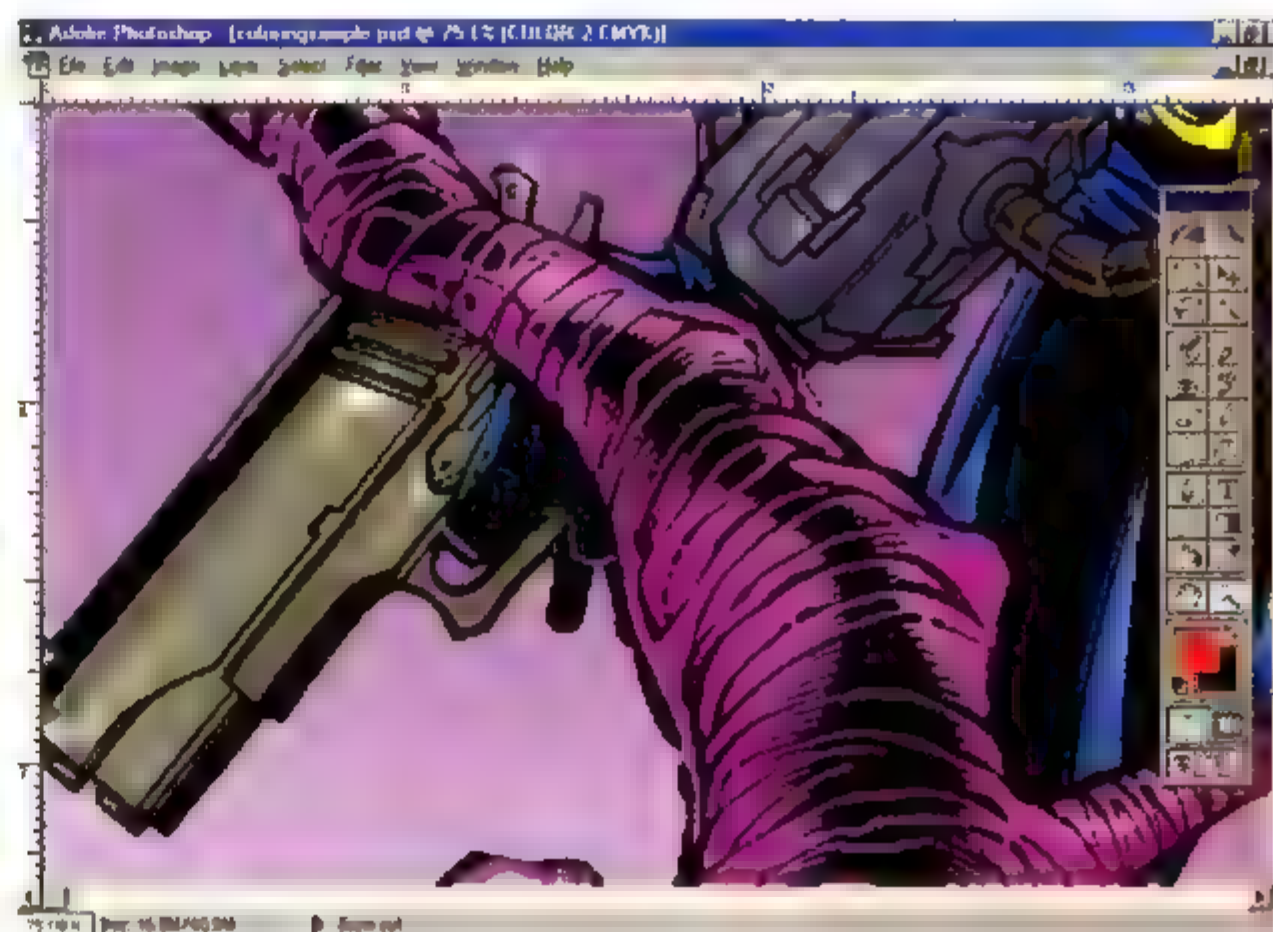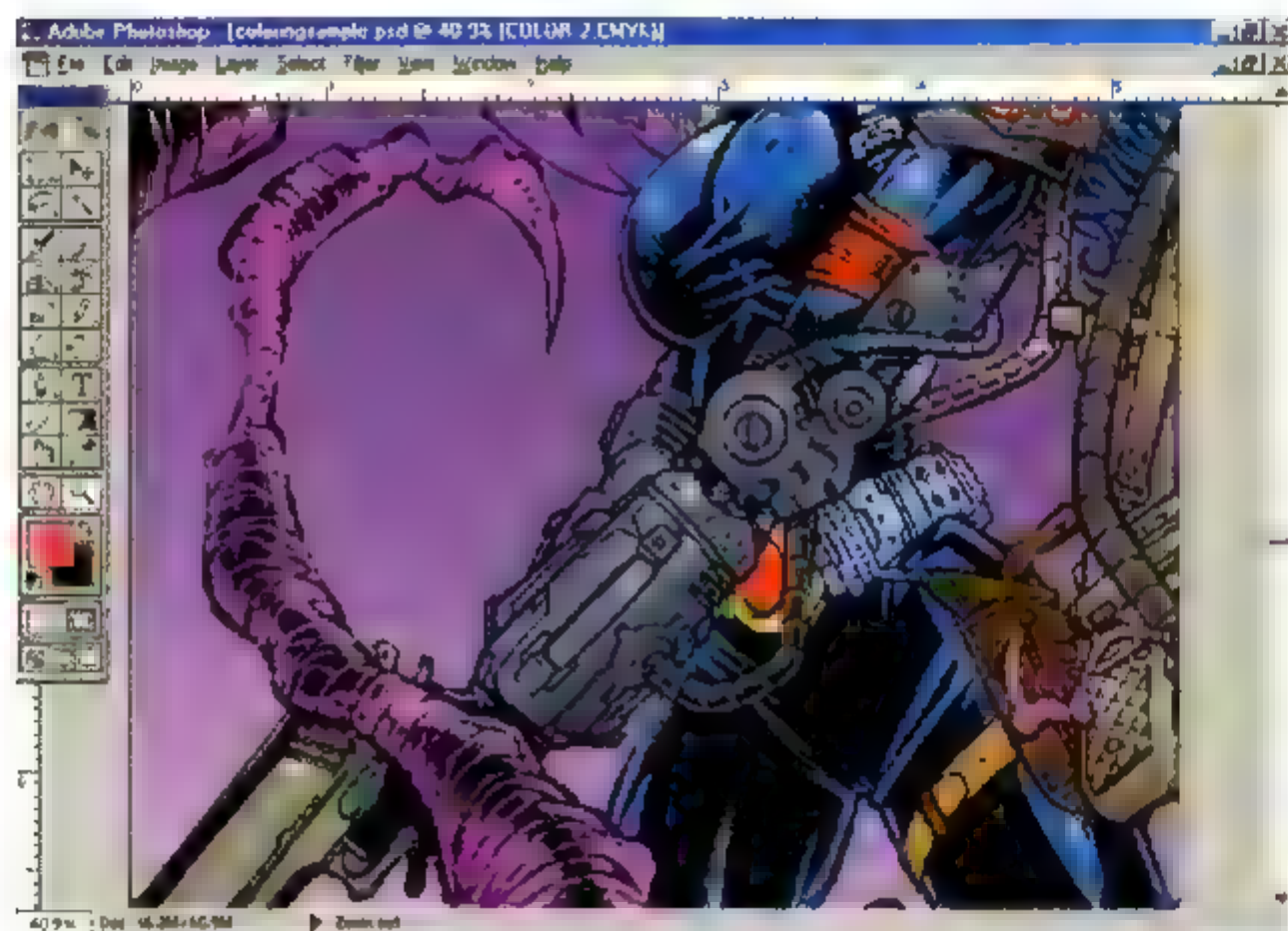
Once you add your layer for highlights, I want you to consider only one color…white. The secret to the highlights is white. That's it! Good night, everybody…thanks for coming…drive carefully on your way home! Heh. Heh. Seriously though, you only have to use variations of white to get the effect that Liquid! Color has made famous. It seems simple, but it is…oh, how do they say it…tedious.
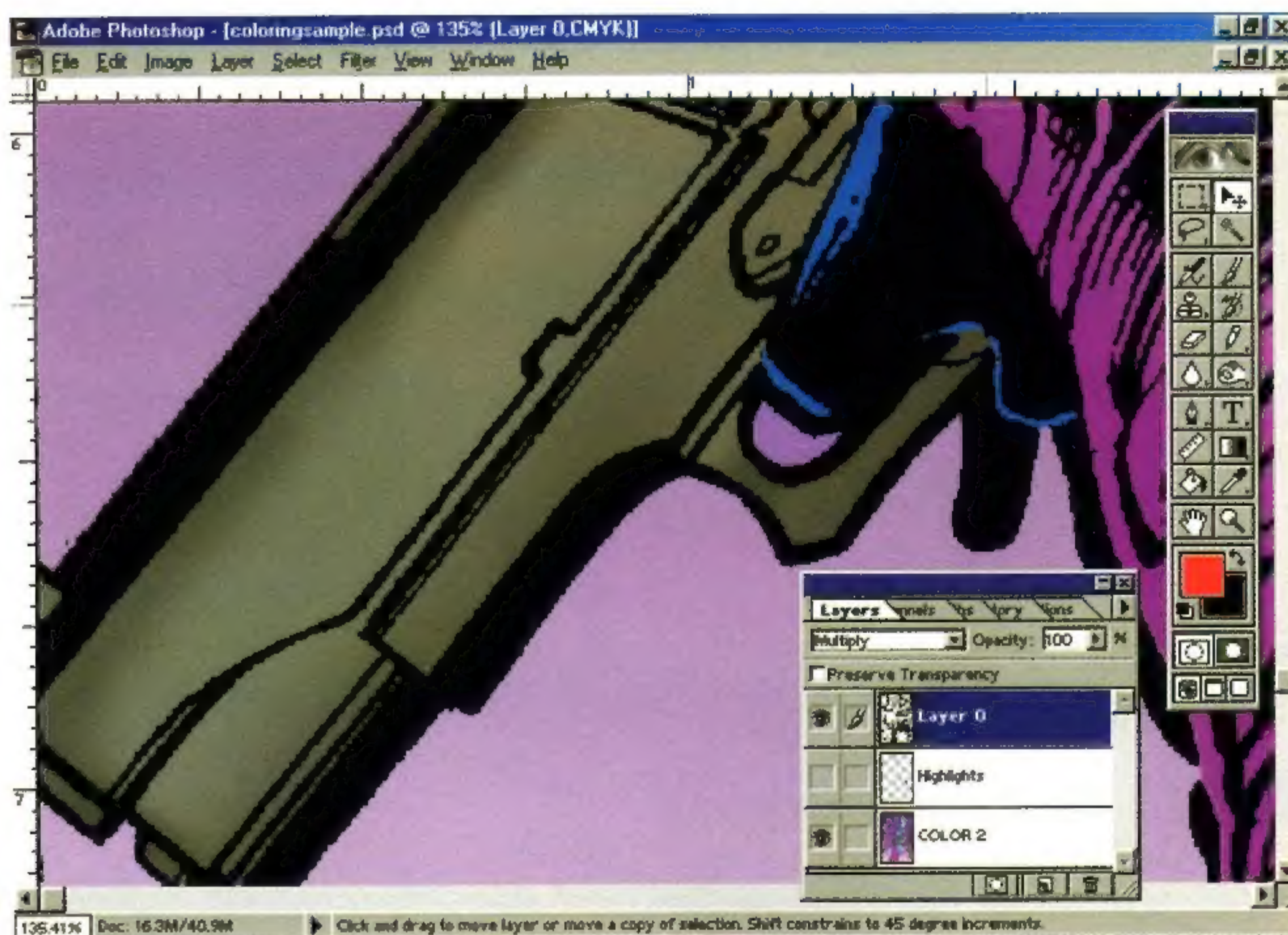
Each little highlight area is created using the Lasso tool and then filling it with an airbrushed percentage of white. This is the part that takes a while (at least it does for me). You may notice a progressive "building up" of color. You'll want to create an area to color with the lasso tool, fill it with, let's say, white at 5% pressure. Then, inside the area you just colored, make another area to color with using the lasso tool again. Set your airbrush pressure slightly higher. Spray the new area you have selected. Keep repeating these steps to achieve that "wet" look that sells a lot of books.
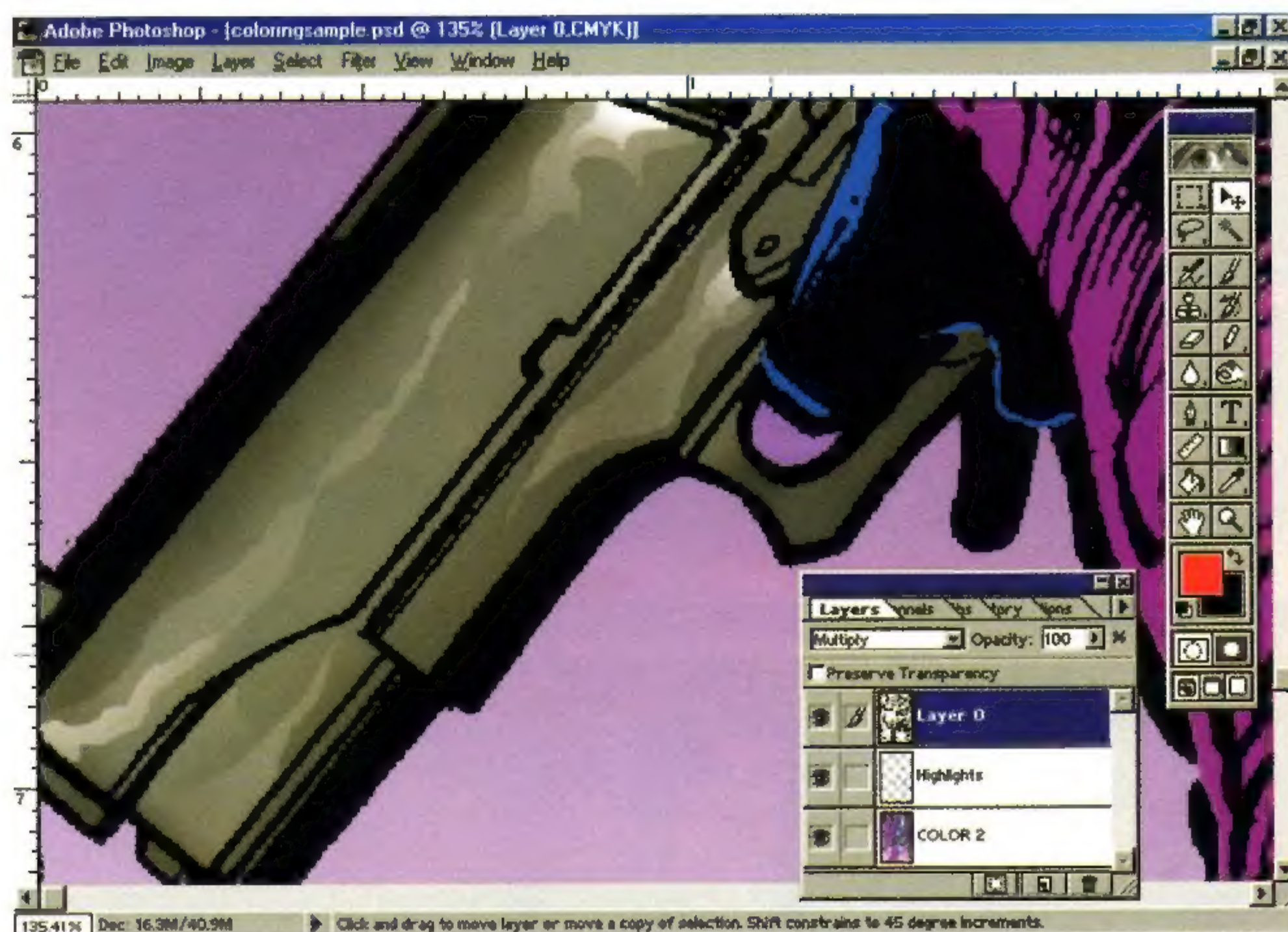
As you get this technique down, you'll have to consider where your light is coming from. Is it coming from the side? The bottom? Directly above? If you don't keep it consistent, your coloring won't look right to the viewer. That is who you are selling the book to, so get some eyeballs on your work other than your own. Your mom will think it's great, so don't go to her. Go to your next door neighbor, or to your local comic store. Pass it off like you didn't even do it yourself...That way you'll get an honest opinion. Compare it to the professionals. Keep coloring until you can honestly say that it could be compared to other professional work.

Good luck to everyone who wants a challenge. Hopefully I've you provided you with enough tips to get you started.

Grating Expectorations

Expose Yourself!

"Are you talking to me? Are you talking to me? Well, you must be...'cause I'm the only one here!"

How many times have you heard that one – or some equally poor paraphrasing of its source? Well, the next time you're checking out the ripples in your creative six-pack, consider stepping away from the mirror of your drawing table or console screen, and...expose yourself! Hopefully, you're not the only one around. Creativity can be a private, personal thing, but there should always be someone else around for you to check out, as well as be seen by.

We all have preferences of influences and inspirations – ideas, creators, and material that have helped drive our own creativity over the years. But as we deal with the pressures and pleasures of talent, career, and the future we sometimes become unaware of the passage of time – and a narrowcasting of our creative mindset – on a larger, outside scale.

Some of us encounter plenty of rough areas as we try to improve our art of choice: writing, penciling, inking, coloring, whatever that choice might be. We're often frustrated as the champagne visions in our head elude the Mad Dog and beer back attempts at setting them down, while many of our comic comrades seem to pump out material effortlessly and confidently. Either way, sometimes through desperation or just complacency, we continue to immerse ourselves in the same artistic waters. As our styles develop and refine, you need to remember that fashion and taste can change rapidly in the comic market – be aware of what else is in the water with you and try to be on the crest of that wave, or at least be able to swim or surf along with it – otherwise, that choppy water or undertow can take you under. And thinking about most comic professionals in those skimpy red Baywatch lifeguard outfits paddling out to save you...well, drowning or a fast chomp in the neck by a bulimic barracuda might be preferable.

Sooner or later almost everyone has at least a skid on the comic book blacktop, or just keeps driving the same stretch over and over, creating a dangerous bald spot. Even if you've found a successful formula and are lucky enough to be riding in the comic vehicle of your choice, keep checking that rear view – objects, fads, and the next hot "taste of the month" are closer than they appear.

Licensing and tie-ins are comic publishing staples based on the fads they're tapping, but tastes and trends in popular culture beyond comics change as well. Wrestling comics (and their toys) became the equivalent of the Sectaurs and Dino-Riders, even as the current day levels of vulgarity and violence made some of us miss the TRU bargain-aisle charm of reading General Spidrax and Dargon's latest adventure (maybe wrestling comics are the rough equivalent of US1...now that's *really* pushing the limits of taste). But even if you don't find hitting people with metal chairs or talking on your big rig's CB interesting, you should be aware that they're out there. You can't afford a cultural disconnect, even the Dazzler's disco ball had them lounging in the comic section of Studio 54 for a while. Don't ignore what's out there.

On the other hand, there can be too many people on the dance floor – not everyone can dance like Travolta. Right now eye-grabbing anime and manga art styles are hot, with a fresh energy readers can't seem to get enough of. But while some have successfully blended the energy and feel of anime to their individual styles, there's a horde of creators following the banzai charge to Capcomize. But there are only so many Shogun super talents like Adam Warren and Joe Madureira; knobby flat fingers and big eyes are not always indicative of the next Masami Obari. One is instantly reminded of the surge of Jim Lee or Rob Liefield and Image imitators that fell rapidly by the wayside. Again, there are only so many Jim Lees in the comics world, and many of the manga-inspired artists that can be identified only by their choice of eye dimensions will be falling by the wayside as did most of the equally-indiscernible Image apers, many still only able to identify a foot as a tiny triangle.

Do what you enjoy, but look beyond your immediate realm of interest and influence to see what else is out there. Or jump in the same car, but bring something along for the ride. And as you bring fresh blood and new ideas, don't be too blind to "old school," even if it looks tired or boring to you. The brilliance of Toth, the elegance of Steve Rude, the incredible draftsmanship of John Buscema will not only stand the test of time, looking at them will help you capitalize on your latest project, no matter how cutting edge you are. There's always something to learn from quality that's preceded you (just as there's almost always a good laugh to be had at stuff that's cheese-eriffic). If you are truly cutting edge, there's always an audience hungry to be cut by something sharp, new, and entertaining.

Sketch will continue to display and explain a variety of others' techniques to keep you driving smoothly and quickly on your comics road. We're excited – and honored – to continually bring you top-tier industry talent that's sure to give you inspiration and insight into your career. There's not a comics fan around that's not eagerly anticipating next issue's feature with industry giant George Perez. Mutants of every power are Cerebroing in for the cool Kubert brothers right after that. And the truly fantastic Frank Cho will make the twelfth issue of Sketch a real event for us, and for you.

In the meantime, keep looking at...everything! While the market is still at an uncomfortable level these are in some ways the best of times, as there is arguably some of the greatest material ever in both quality and diversity being produced. Don't short yourself by failing to look at material beyond your usual favorites. At the least, venture to the racks beyond the comics realm: true aesthetes and thinkers should be checking out the Comics Journal for seriously deep looks and analysis of the indie and highbrow scene, those that would like to indulge their Alex Ross-like leanings might want to check out Artist's Magazine, and writers should find something of interest in Creative Screenwriting. These are just suggestions, to be sure (I had to censor my own favs – Sketch is a nice, respectable magazine), and I urge you to seek out something new for yourself and then share it with the rest of the Sketch creative community. We all need the exposure.

Keep Sketching

Flint